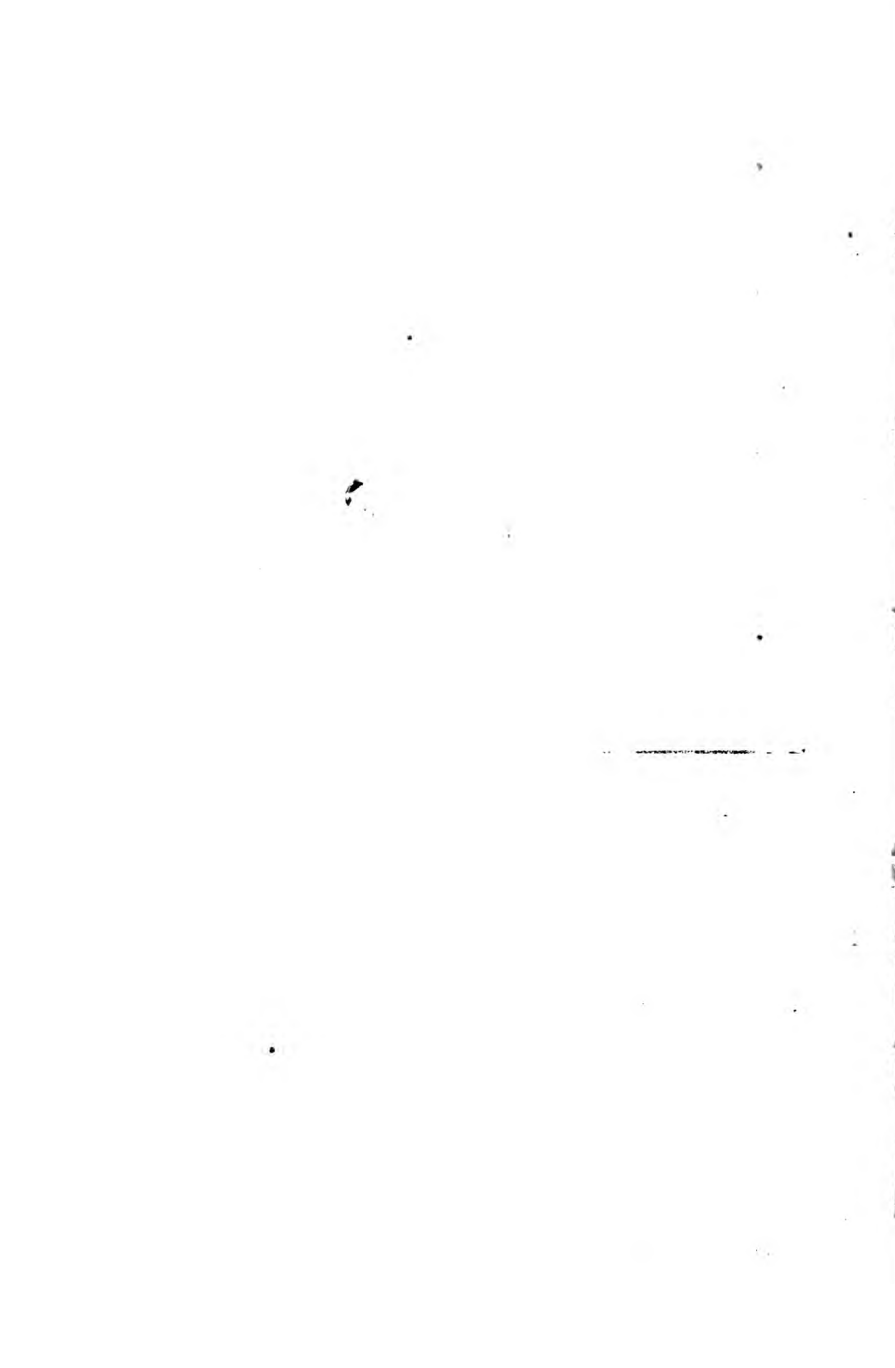


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HISTORY
OF THE
TELUGU CHRISTIANS.

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Jesuits. Letters from missions
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HISTORY

OF THE

TELUGU CHRISTIANS.

BY

A FATHER
OF THE MILL HILL ST. JOSEPH'S SOCIETY.



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PREFACE.

This small volume, containing firsthand information regarding the conversion of the Telugu people, will undoubtedly be welcomed by all who are interested in Catholic Foreign Missions.

The compiler takes no credit to himself as well-nigh the whole of the contents has been borrowed from the "*Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*." Translations are at best faulty; the reader must, therefore, make allowance for any shortcomings as to the language.

The compiler takes this opportunity to offer his sincerest thanks to the VERY REV. FR. L. BESSE, S.J., of Trichinopoly, for his encouragement and the valuable information given. He acknowledges at the same time a debt of gratitude to the REV. FR. D. KUSS of Bellary, who, notwithstanding his multifarious duties, has been so kind as to correct and modify the proofs.

GUNTAKAL,
BRITISH INDIA,
22 July, 1910.

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THE COMPILER.

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INTRODUCTION.

KIND reader, although the early history of Christianity in many Eastern countries may glory in a line of martyrs, who shine by the blood poured out for God and their faith, the story of the foundation of the Christian religion in India numbers many heroes, whose peculiar glory is to have suffered with true Christian heroism the martyrdom of contempt, scorn and social degradation. This form of torture is often more effective in forcing men to sacrifice conviction and to abandon principles than fire and sword.

Besides, India offers for persecution of this sort, opportunities which no other country can. Every Indian's social position, walk and prospects in life, marriage, kinship and friendship, are determined by his partly religious and partly social system of caste.

To abandon this, means to lose everything dear in life. To give up for one's faith and principles all that men prize, is a mark of moral greatness, and, whether we share their belief or not, a generous and noble mind must admire such heroes.

The following pages contain the numerous examples of these martyrs, whose sufferings will excite our sympathy if not our enthusiasm.

Those who are interested in the progress of Christianity in this land will be struck by the heroism of another body of men. They are the pioneer missionaries, who left home and country, family and friends to toil under an Indian sun for the conversion of souls.

Contrasted with the present conditions and the state of the country, the security of person and property, the "pax Britânica," the many material conveniences, especially in the shape of railways, roads and other means of communication, the lot of the early missionaries was indeed a hard one. True, they had advantages of which we are deprived. They enjoyed a prestige which gave them a welcome entrance to houses and families from which the missionary is now religiously excluded. They also knew nothing of the burden of opening and maintaining schools, which nowadays is continually becoming heavier. But, with all this, their work was a strain under which many fell a martyr to charity and zeal for souls.

Though times have altered and our age loves to boast of its much vaunted tolerance in regard to religion, for both classes of heroes, the new convert and the missionary, the path to martyrdom is still open. Human nature has not altered, and the tyranny of caste, though its bonds are being loosened along the highways of civilisation, still stands a formidable obstacle to Christianity.

But even the levelling process of the West, which is being followed in the East, is not levelling

the way for the distinctive virtues of the religion of Christ, which is and will remain a religion of self-denial, and not of self-indulgence, of unselfish charity, and not of widely advertised philanthropy, of Christian obedience, and not of self-assertive license.

Hence, though the present day does not, for various reasons, appear to be remarkable for conspicuous examples of Christian heroism, the opportunities for producing such heroes have not passed, and it is possible that the perusal of this book will inspire some generous souls with the desire to emulate the examples of the heroes of a not too remote past.

Why should the heroic conduct of the forefathers of the Telugu Christians and of the pioneer Missioners not inspire their children, as well as the later labourers in the Lord's vineyard, to exclaim with the great St. Augustine: "*Quod ipsi et ipsæ, cur non et ego?*" Why should not I do what those brave men and women, my equals, so nobly did?

The early days of Christianity among the Telugus however, were blessed not only with a crop of heroes but also with a bigger harvest of souls.

From independent enquiries made by the compiler of this book, but which were unfortunately not responded to in every case, it would appear that the Catholic population of the Telugu-speaking people is in round numbers about 45,000. Of this 78% is caste, and 22% non-caste. Taking the whole Telugu population at 20,000,000, we get less than 5 Catholics in every 500. The unpleasant reflections occasioned by

these figures are not lessened, either by considering the time we have been at work among these people, or by the figures given by Protestants as the fruit of their comparatively recent work. The 18 different sects together claim 304,000 adherents. No doubt the numbers claimed by Catholics may be set down as including only practising Christians, while adherence to some of the sects seems to involve little more than mere enrolment. And we may also point to the lakhs of rupees annually poured into the country by Protestants. But, minimize the figures as you please, the contrast is striking, and the obvious duty of Catholic laymen as well as missionaries is too manifest to comment upon.

Of course, it must not be overlooked that mere numbers count little before God, and it is a great consolation to be able to say that, wherever our Catholics are in sufficient numbers to exert any influence at all, they really form the leaven spoken of by Our Lord. Thus, the position of women in the Telugu Christian communities is appreciably higher, not only in the Christian families, but also in those of their heathen neighbours.

Again, morality in general, and in particular among the children and youth of such villages, is far higher than in exclusively heathen villages. Purity too, as a virtue, holds a very low place among the heathen. The devotion of the people for their priest also reminds one almost of the relation between priest and people of thorough Catholic countries like Ireland.

Unfortunately, where the modern pleader has settled down, litigation having almost ceased to be settled by time-honoured amicable arbitration, cases are not wanting of the traditional reverence for the priestly character having suffered at times. But this is only another instance of how western civilisation has produced also baneful effects.

The same may be said, and with emphasis, of drink. The Telugus were a sober people, until, for the sake of revenue, drink-shops were forced upon them. If the people of India are not so submissive and easy to govern as they used to be, the blame is certainly not the Catholic missionary's nor the people's.

Like their language, often called, by reason of its sweet and harmonious sound, the Italian of the East, the Telugus, as a people, are suave, homely and devoted children of their native soil to which they cling with a tenacity that has left them rather behind in the race for education, civilization and progress that characterize their more enterprising Tamil brethren of the farther South. Hence their few industries have languished, and their agriculture, owing to stolid adherence to primitive and often wasteful methods, is less productive than it might be. Consequently the prosperity of bygone days is remembered only with regret.

Incidentally this throws a little light on one of the difficulties besetting the missionary of to-day, and that is the growing impoverishment of his people, which he is unable to mitigate; and so the door is opened

to the evangelist with the big purse. Though this does not speak very well for the poor Indian Christian, it partly explains, if it does not excuse, the unpleasant contrast of some figures quoted above. It may also afford some consolation in our poverty to find among the approved methods mentioned in "The Jesuit Mission in Madura, by J. S. Chandler, M.A., 1900," where the methods of the Jesuits are appraised, that "money" is not included. This is the list: (1) Acquisition of the vernaculars, (2) Circulation of literature, (3) Efficient organization, (4) Condemnation of polygamy, (5) Opposition to idolatry, (6) Personal courage, (7) Endurement of suffering.

Without in any way entering on a discussion of the merits of this list of "approved methods," it may at least be made a subject for consideration by those actually engaged in the work of conversion, and by those responsible for it, as to whether some efforts towards improving our position might be attempted.

That the pioneer missionaries' work was eminently successful, there will be little doubt, and Chandler sums up the secret of their success thus: "Their method was to gain influence by any and all means. To this end they had no scruples in using funds in their hands for presents to disarm enemies and to secure the favour of princes. They would enter into struggles between chieftains in order to play off one against another if they could thereby avert the hostility of either. They commanded the respect of the educated by their own scholarship and linguistic

ability. They won the confidence of the poor by living and suffering with them. They exercised authority over the minds of the credulous by assuming to perform miraculous cures through their blessing bestowed upon objects worn upon the person. They accomplished surprising results by gaining control of the mental processes of diseased and afflicted persons. Above all, they committed themselves unreservedly to the endurance of persecution when it met them. They baptised immense numbers, but a large proportion of these were aged persons or little children, or the sick and dying."

Allowing for the peculiar flavour usually accompanying the words of Protestants when writing about Jesuits or things Catholic, which they cannot understand, and the gratuitous assertion about bribes and miraculous powers, for which no evidence is offered, one wonders whether the methods here outlined would not command the same success in the 20th century that they commanded in the 17th and 18th.

In view, therefore, of the increased facilities and general favourable condition of our times, let the words of T. W. M. Marshall, author of *Christian Missions*, in his conclusion to the little book "*Catholic Missions in Southern India, to 1865*," by W. Strickland, s.j., conclude also this preface: "We only repeat the testimony of the most experienced Indian missionaries when we affirm once more, that the triumph of Christianity in Madura, as in other provinces, depends

now upon the adequate application of human means. The zeal of the Apostle is the first, but not the only condition of success. Conversions will be, in some measure, proportioned to the abundance of the subordinate helps which he may receive. It is possible to look only on what has been called the romantic side of Christian missions, and to be fascinated by the unearthly elements of wisdom, heroism and charity, which make up so large a part of their history ; but they have their practical aspect also ; and, as the first missionaries of the Church, while gazing upon the cloud, which hid their ascended Lord from their view, were admonished by angels not to lose time in that wistful contemplation, but to set themselves to the long and painful task, of which, after manifold toils, a death like their Master's would be the issue, so it will be our wisdom to pass at once from sterile sympathy and admiration to the most fruitful labour of willing sacrifice and generous co-operation."

D. KUSS.

ERRATA.

| | | | |
|---------|----------|---------------|--------------------------------------------|
| PAGE 28 | NOTE, | <i>erase</i> | "onso." |
| „ 80 | LINE 11, | <i>insert</i> | "encounter" <i>after</i> "first." |
| „ 85 | „ 14, | <i>for</i> | "gup" <i>read</i> "gap." |
| „ 89 | „ 16, | „ | "singales" <i>read</i> "singles." |
| „ 120 | NOTE 3, | „ | "lines" <i>read</i> "lieux." |
| „ 244 | LINE 16 | „ | "Manddigubba" <i>read</i> "Maddigubba." |
| „ 262 | „ 11 | „ | "adminiter" <i>read</i> "administer." |
| „ 286 | „ 3 | „ | "woman" <i>read</i> "women." |

HISTORY

OF THE

TELUGU CHRISTIANS.



One would naturally suppose that the conversion of the Telugu country followed in the wake of the wonderful advance religion had made in the Madura Mission, whose real founder was the great Jesuit Father Robert De Nobili.*

Already in 1699, about the time the Carnatic Mission was begun, this flourishing Mission numbered 150,000 christians. Letters of that date, as preserved for us in La Mission de Maduré, state that this number was daily increasing and that each missionary could count on a thousand converts a year. By this time the good seed had already spread through the "Jinji"

* In 1597 two Jesuit Fathers and a Brother were at the Court of Venkata Rajulu in Chandragiri, where they remained till about 1615. Their work was not a success owing to the fact that being dressed in black they were considered to be *Prangis* i.e., foreigners. The king, who was favourably disposed towards them, advised them to dress in white, but this the Fathers considered too great a departure. Father de Nobili, however, adopted this custom later on.

country¹ as far north as Vellore. Hence the natural inference would be that the continuation of this good work further north into the Telugu country must have been due to the efforts of the Jesuits of Madura, which country was then a Portuguese Jesuit Province.

But here we meet with a somewhat new element in the progress of this so rapidly extending Mission field.

Louis the XIV, King of France, anxious to share in the glory and commercial prosperity consequent upon the conversion of the idolatrous nations, and jealous, no doubt, of the political power which the influence of the foreign Missions seemed naturally to confer on the Catholic Princes of Europe, wished that, after the example of Portugal and Spain, France also should have its missions in the far East—a laudable desire, which, however, in view of the inordinate zeal with which the King of Portugal defended his supposed rights, was by no means so easily realised.

To carry out this plan, it was necessary to withdraw the new missions from the authority and influence of the King of Portugal, and herein lay precisely the great difficulty. The King of Portugal, in virtue of the privileges granted him by the Holy See, claimed a right not only over the countries subject to his crown, but also over all other missions, though established in the kingdom of Native Princes.

Ridiculous though this may seem, the Portuguese have adhered to it with a pertinacity which has been

(1) Kānchi Désham.

the cause of great harm to souls in the past, and is, where "double jurisdiction" still prevails, undoubtedly a drawback to the good cause even to the present day.

Rome was appealed to by France. The Jesuits of France were ready and eager to carry out the task now asked of them by Louis XIV. But Portugal proved obstinate.

The Superior General of the Jesuits wrote to the Provincial in France: "Please, consider, what is the General to do. He is urged, on the one hand, by the Most Christian King of France to change our form of Government in favour of his subjects, and hindered, on the other hand, by the Most Serene King of Portugal, who will hear of no such change. Let the Kings agree between themselves, or let the Sovereign Pontiff decide, I shall be ready to obey."¹

No definite results were forthcoming. Meanwhile Louis XIV did not remain idle. He sent out the first batch of 6 French Jesuits², who laboured in Siam and China. These were all picked men, who, because

1. La Mission de Maduré I.

2. Father Verjus, a holy man of great tact and ability, well known and esteemed at the different courts of Europe, was appointed Superior. His task was not an easy one. To establish his French subjects in countries over the whole of which Portugal claimed exclusive rights, presented serious difficulties. The Propaganda had appointed French Vicars Apostolic and French Bishops to these missions. Portugal persistently persevered in worrying Rome with her claims. Hence Father Verjus' interests naturally came in conflict with those of opposing parties.

of their great learning, were given the honorary title and rank of academicians. The King soon sent 15 more, and these were followed shortly after by a gallant band of 60, who were spread over nearly all the kingdoms of India¹.

Little by little they obtained privileges which were calculated to withdraw them gradually from the influence of the Portuguese Provincial. But a final separation was not effected till the year 1700. In that year the French Jesuits became independent of the Portuguese Province of Madura, but even then, not to offend the susceptibilities of the King of Portugal, the Superior could not assume the title of Provincial. They were obliged to conform at least to the letter of the royal decree which forbade the office of Provincial or of Visitor to be given to any but a Portuguese.

At this period the French Jesuits set about executing their long cherished plan of starting a mission in the Carnatic. These Jesuits were refugees from

The question of transit of the French Jesuits into their respective missions might have proved well nigh insurmountable but for Father Verjus' great influence and tact. Portuguese vessels would not take them. French ships were few. The resourceful man opened out other routes by way of Poland, *via* Persia and by the Red Sea. He knew how to gain the good will of England, which, though at war with France, more than once offered him passages for his men on board her ships. The Jesuits gratefully acknowledge themselves indebted to the Royal Company of London for their kind services.

Lettres Edif. et Cur. vol. 6, p. 230.

1. *Lettres Edif. et Curieuses*. Preface to Vol. 6.

Siam, who, on account of a revolution, had to leave that country¹ and settled in Pondichery in 1689.

At first they accepted the hospitality of the Capuchins, but in 1691 they obtained from the French Government the ground now occupied by the Missions Etrangères. The most prominent among these missionaries was Father Tachard, who became the first Superior of the French Jesuits at Pondichery. He must have been a man of great energy and enterprise, for he tells us, by the way, in one of his letters that he had been four times to Europe in 10 or 11 years.

No sooner had they obtained a firm footing in the principal town of the French colony than they set to work evangelising the pagans. Their labours bore abundant fruit and the faith spread rapidly into the Kingdom of the Carnatic.

These truly zealous and apostolic men established their mission on the same footing as that of Madura. Some of the Fathers had, in fact, received their training in that most wonderful field of missionary enterprise. The same spirit of self-denial and undaunted zeal which had conquered the South and brought the Tamil nations into the fold of the Good Shepherd, was now to carry the banner of the Cross northwards among the Telugu people of the Carnatic.

It is hopeless to attempt to define the limits of that country which from early times went by the name of the Carnatic. Others far more capable have

1. This revolution took place in 1687. It dethroned King Phra-naraī, who was succeeded by Pitra-cha, a Mandarin.

attempted to do so. But they vary and differ in their respective limitations, to such an extent, that we are still left to conjecture where it began and where it ended. For our present purpose we may assume that the Jesuit Fathers meant by the Carnatic mission, at least practically, their work among the Telugu people. They always speak of it as such, and date their letters from town or village so and so, "in the Carnatic."

According to their reports, they had already flourishing mission stations in that country. Father Mauduit¹, the first pioneer among the Telugus, had his head-quarters at Carveypondi (about 10 miles south-east of Tiruvaluru) and, in a letter written in 1701, mentions Cangipuram (Conjeveram)² as the capital of the Carnatic. It is true that Father Bouchet, who was appointed the first Superior of the Carnatic mission, fixed his head-quarters at Thakkolum (about eight miles south of Arkonam) which is still within Tamil country. But before this, conversions had already been made as far north as Vellore, and, as they deliberately styled their new enterprise as the Carnatic mission, this could refer only to a country where a new people with a different language were to be gained for Christ.

1. Was the first to start the Carnatic mission. *L.E. et C.*, vol. 6, p. 88.

2. His first station was Conjeveram where within six months of his arrival he built two churches outside the town, baptised 150 persons, and converted two Brahmins who became his Catechists.

The Jesuits themselves were somewhat vague in speaking of the Carnatic. In the general index to the *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*, vol. 8, we find under the heading "Carnatic": "Kingdom of the Peninsula below the Ganges, the coast of Coromandel."

Father Mauduit, in a letter dated "Carveypondi, in the kingdom of the Carnatic, 1702," says: "As our intention is to establish a firm mission not only in the kingdom of the Carnatic, whence I write this letter, but also in the kingdoms surrounding us, it has been judged proper that I should obtain an exact knowledge of those countries, so as to ascertain where it will be advantageous to establish ourselves. For this purpose I made a long journey westward, of which I herewith send you particulars."

From this, one would be led to infer that the country he visited was not the Carnatic. It is true, his intention was to travel as far as possible towards the west, and he actually did go as far as Colalam¹ which, it may be presumed, was considered to be outside the Carnatic; but, as we shall see in the sequel, Providence redirected his steps and we find him suddenly turn north-east into the southern part of the Telugu country.

The name Carnatic, once so renowned throughout India, seems to have been derived from a strong fortress of that name built on a hill in the south. Father Saignes, who dates his letter *Attipakam dans le*

1. "Kolār. The original form of the name was Kuvalālu, contracting to Kolāla." *Imp. Gazette Mysore & Coorg.*

Carnate ce 5 Juin 1736, says : "I live at a distance of no more than 9 miles from the mountain on which stands the famous Citadel, called *Carnata*, which has given its name to the whole country¹.

This once famous name is now well-nigh forgotten, and hence among the Tamil people the word *Carnatacam* has become a byword for old-fashioned ways; just as they colloquially use the word *Cumbakonam* to express confusion or deceit.

The Telugu-speaking people occupy a territory by far the most extensive of India. It has no defined limits to the South, but may roughly be said to begin 40 or 50 miles North of Madras. It is bounded on the East by the Bay of Bengal; on the West by Mysore and the Kanarese country, and to the North it occupies the whole of the South East portion of the Nizam's Dominions. The area in square miles is 78,804, as against 53,578 of Tamil country. The Tamil-speaking people, at the present time, however, outnumber the Telugu population by 1,228,079; the latter counting 14,315,304, the former 15,543,383. From

1. Father de la Lane, in a letter dated Pondicherry 30 Jan. 1709, remarks : The Mission for which Providence has destined me is called the Carnatic. It begins *a la hauteur* de Pondicherry and has no other limits on the north than the Mogul Empire; on the West it is bounded by a part of Mysore. *Lett. Edif. et Cur.*, vol. 6, page 365.

However, in 1703, we note that the Superior at Pondicherry and the Provincial of Malabar had fixed the respective limits thus :— Draw a straight line from Pondicherry to the West; the country to the South belongs to Madura; that to the North, to the Carnatic.

statistics, which we shall consider later on, the Catholic Telugu population may be estimated to be at present not less than 45,000 while the Protestants, all sects included, claim 304,045. Considering the rich harvests gathered when first the seed was sown, and the rapid spread of Christianity in those early days of the mission, we have here a comparatively small increase for 200 years. Taking into account, however, the different agencies at work to frustrate the spread of the good seed, we cannot but acknowledge it to be the work of God, without which, in all human probability, the seed would have withered as soon as it had taken root.

Not to mention the fierce opposition, from the very outset, of the Brahmins and the Dasaries,¹ who saw their influence being undermined by this new creed, the unfortunate suppression of the Jesuits brought the work of the missions to a sudden standstill. There were no labourers to continue the work they had so nobly begun. How could half-a-dozen men of the *Missions Etrangères*, who were entrusted with the task, cultivate a vineyard which then already extended over the whole of Southern India, from Cape Comorin to within a short distance of the Kistna river. Add to this, the oft-recurring famines that devastated the land and scattered the little flock, the constant inroads of hordes of Mahratta flying columns laying waste whatever came in their way, internecine wars, petty Rajahs incessantly worrying the followers of this

1. Vishnu-devotees ; from "Dasu," servant, slave.

new religion, and last, though not least, the tyrannical persecution of Tippu, who, harrasing the scattered flock in their hiding places, forced them, under pain of having their ears and noses cut off, to abjure their religion and embrace Islamism. The consideration of facts such as these should make one hesitate to judge adversely the slow march of Catholicism among the Telugus.

The absence of any record of Christian fortitude and heroism under these trying circumstances is no doubt disheartening. The Jesuit Fathers record some noble examples of the magnanimous and chivalrous Christian spirit of their first neophytes under the severest trials, but the thought that fifty thousand Christians, mainly Kanarese, allowed themselves to be circumcised under Tippu, makes one feel sad and tempts one to draw the inference—shall I say unjustly?—that, unlike Corea, China and Japan, India is not a land of martyrs. Though, no doubt, we must accept extenuating circumstances, which forbid us to consider those unfortunate people as formal apostates, still one could have wished to read of some example here and there of that self-sacrificing devotion to Christ which laid such a solid foundation for the faith in the West. The *sanguis Martyrum* would here also have proved the *semen Christianorum*, and undoubtedly have watered and fertilised the soil that now alas! proves so mournfully barren.

Nevertheless, we should not measure different times and people by a uniform standard. It must not

be forgotten that the poor Christians, scattered and few as they were comparatively, were left without Priests to encourage them or Sacraments to quicken their faith. Our Blessed Lord's prediction was here, too, to a large extent verified: "*Percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves.*" "They shall strike the pastor and the sheep shall be dispersed". Pombal, the Portuguese Minister of Joseph Emmanuel I, dealt the death-blow to the missions in the East. The French Revolution deprived the newly born flock of their shepherds.

There is, however, in this sad and pitiful picture one redeeming feature. The Indian Missions, at least those we refer to, were left to their own resources for nearly a hundred years. If we do not find the faith entirely extinguished, we have reason to adore God's Providence and admire the people, who, though poor and dispersed and deprived of all spiritual help and consolation, kept the torch of faith alight, and handed down to their children the gift once delivered to their fathers. It is consoling, too, to learn from one who felt and most bitterly grieved over the defection of so many Christians, that he himself had the happiness of seeing these wandering sheep return to the fold. For, no sooner had the English restored peace to the country, and the fear of persecution subsided, than they came back to offer in repentance their humble submission. Abbé Dubois, when first entering upon his missionary work, speaks in plaintive and heartrending terms of this deplorable

defection ; but his sorrow was turned into joy when these poor deserters, hearing the voice of their Master, submitted themselves once more to the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ.

Having placed before our readers this short but necessary review of what took place during the years which elapsed from the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773 till the time that the Missions Etrangères were in some measure able to cope with the gigantic task of gathering in the strayed and scattered sheep, we shall now follow the pioneers of the Carnatic in their wonderful work of evangelising the Telugu nation.

The *primitiæ*, *i.e.*, the first among this pacific rural nation, were a widow and her four children. What a source of happiness it must have been when Father Mauduit in the year 1701¹ poured the waters of redemption over this solitary family. When we reflect how difficult, nay, almost impossible it is to convert one that has no connection or relationship with our Christians, we ask ourselves, how did a helpless widow, with children, whose future alliances had to be provided for, summon up courage enough to embrace a religion of which none of her kinsfolk had, perhaps, so much as heard the name? Priests now working among the Telugus, in their sad experience of an almost total inability to bring any of the outside caste people into the fold, have more than once

1. History of Father Mauduit's journey, *Lett. Edif. et C.*, vol. 6, p. 151.

exclaimed, "how was it possible at all for our Christians—who are mostly caste people—to have broken away from their old prejudices, their friends and their relatives, to embrace a religion which was practically unknown? And this, no doubt, is a very fair question to consider, when at present we stand face to face with a callous indifference among the caste Hindus, which makes one almost despair of ever seeing India a Christian country. Taking into account that, for the Telugu country at least, we may say: "*Et quidem in omnem terram exivit sonus eorum*,"—Their voice hath gone forth to the limits of the land," it seems somewhat of a mystery that, with the increased facilities of knowing the truth, with examples of every description of caste among the Christians before them, with the number of Priests now spread among their villages, there is, as it were, a deadlock, and that, too, for the last hundred years and more. Can it be that the Lord has withdrawn His hand from these people, and the malediction uttered over an ungrateful Jerusalem—" *Ecce relinquetur vobis domus vestra deserta* " (MATH. xxiii 38)—should also here have its fulfilment? One feels at times inclined to apply to them the words of Isaias, with which our Divine Lord so appropriately rebuked the hardened Jews: "*Incrassatum est enim cor populi hujus et auribus graviter audierunt.*" (MATH. xiii. 15).

How then, we ask, did the Jesuits succeed two hundred years ago among a people of this kind? One feels somewhat of a reproach on reflecting that those

brave men lived lives of the greatest self-sacrifice. They understood our Lord's word: "*Hoc enim genus non ejicitur nisi per orationem et jejunium*" (MATH. xvii 20). In thus measuring ourselves with those holy pioneers, we feel as if they might rise from their graves¹ and say to us "*Vade et fac similiter*. – Go and do likewise."

Father Mauduit gives an interesting and detailed narrative of his journey which brought about the conversion of the first Telugu family. Were it not for its length, it would be interesting to give it in full. It would show us exactly the difference between those times and ours. We must recollect that the missionaries of the Carnatic worked on the same principles as those of Madura. They led the life of true *sanyasis* and adapted themselves in every way to the Hindu customs. They touched, for instance, no meat, fish or any life-giving thing such as eggs. In fact they stood on a level with the strict Brahmin and were therefore called "*Romapuri sanyasis*" or Roman monks. Their domestic servants were Brahmins and high caste converts, so that there was nothing to hinder their free intercourse with the highest classes.

Father Mauduit, who had his headquarters at Carveypondi, started on the 3rd September 1701, on his reconnoitring journey which took him about two months.² At the first place he halted for the night,

1. Three of those pioneer Jesuits lie buried at Krishnapuram, Anantapur District.

2. *Lett. Edif. et Cur.*, vol. 6, page 151.

he and his catechists put up in a large pagoda. In his letter he remarks that in a country like this, devoid of hotels and caravansaries, this is their ordinary shelter. They said their evening prayers in this temple and sang hymns before a Crucifix which he attached to one of the pillars. One of the Brahmin guardians of the temple, who otherwise raised no objections whatever to their devotions, was only disconcerted at their turning their backs to and thus dishonouring or slighting his gods during their religious rites. At Alcatile (Arcot) he stayed in the house of a Brahmin who was very punctual in his *pūja* to "Puliar." The priest slept in the room where the idol was kept. To the Brahmin's surprise Father Mauduit had thrown the idol aside and put up an altar for the celebration of Mass! The good Brahmin must no doubt have felt shocked at this novel procedure, but we find that, instead of falling into a rage, on the contrary he afforded the priest every facility for the exercise of his devotions. Father Mauduit remarks that he felt as much at home with this Brahmin as if he were in a Christian house. He preached without let or hindrance to the crowds of people that came there to listen to him. His hopes of converting this good man, who received him so hospitably under his roof, were, however, frustrated, because of the three wives to whom he was intensely attached.

Again, at Vellore we see him lodged in the house of a Brahmin, which fact, he observes, gave him great influence. He tells us of his catechists, some of whom

are Brahmins. The *Dorei*, or headman of Vellore, paid him a visit. He returned this visit and conversed with the *Dorei*'s wife, who was ill, disposing her as far as he could in favour of the Christian religion. At this time the Moors (Mahomedans) were expected to make an attack on Vellore. The whole place was therefore in a state of commotion. Hence he considered the time unsuitable for founding a mission station at Vellore, and travelled further on. As he had left a catechist at Arcot to instruct the neophytes, so he left one here to prepare them for baptism by the time he should return. He mentions that there were a dozen pariahs among the neophytes. How he managed to make converts among this class, is somewhat difficult to understand, remembering he lived with the Brahmins. Only actual baptism, however, where contact is necessary, would create a difficulty.¹ He tells us, in a letter of the same date², how some time before he had to evade the suspicion of the Brahmins and Sudras, when at Polur³ he managed to baptize some pariahs at dead of night in the jungle at a long distance from the village. At any rate, before he could return, Vellore had been taken by the Moors, the catechist had run away, and the poor pariah neophytes were caught, tied to a tree and deprived of everything they had.

1. They had pariah catechists as well. *Lett. Ed. et C.*, vol. 6, p. 146.

2. The letter accompanying this narrative.

3. Polur, 71 miles N.W. of Pondichery.

Father Mauduit also was stopped on his way and detained by the Moors. He was disrespectfully treated but soon allowed to go on.

Passing through Pallikonda, where he was well received by the Rajaputs, who were masters of the place, he arrived at Kuriyetam (Gudiyatam), where he was the guest of a Komati with a large family. In the morning he said Mass in the house at which the whole household was present, the good Komati himself burning incense and offering flowers to the true God.

At Erudurgam (Yedudurgalu), he was detained outside the village. They suspected him of being a second Ram-Raj, who, disguised as a monk, had made himself master of so many towns and fortresses. When, however, they learned of his peaceful mission, they allowed him to enter. He stayed only a day in this village, and then, disregarding the great opposition of his catechists, who had heard all sorts of reports regarding the princes living on the other side of the hills, he crossed that wild mountain range. To Pedda Nayaku Durgam was only half-a-day's journey, but they got lost in the jungle. Overcome by hunger and fatigue, and amidst constant fear of tigers, which were very numerous in those parts, they arrived, after two days' incessant march at the said town. The place was a small one, but it was filled with people from the neighbourhood, who had flocked thither for shelter for fear of the Moors. "We had" says Father Mauduit, "to put up in a wretched hut and passed a very bad night." The following day he

paid his respects to the Poligar of the town, who received him well. He was offered a seat of high rank, but the good Father preferred to spread his tiger skin, "which," he adds, "is the custom in this country."

Naturally he introduced the object of his tour and announced to this good governor the kingdom of God. Father Mauduit received all marks of respect, and a suitable lodging was assigned to him. The Poligar moreover ordered his men to see that the Father and his suite were provided with all they required. A crowd of Brahmin women came to see him, and asked him if their husbands, who had gone into distant parts of the country, would be successful in their undertakings. He told them he had not come to India to deceive the people or tell flattering stories as the false *gurus* were wont to do. He had come to preach to them the happy kingdom of a future life. "They appeared to be well disposed, and as there were others of good caste, who eagerly listened to my instruction, I left some of my catechists there to see if the good seed would take root." Then he travelled on to Bairepalle, where he found only one man, the whole village having been deserted for fear of the Moors. Thence he proceeded to Tailur, a small town. Here he said Mass and met the head of a numerous family, who, though a staunch Lingaite¹, was very eager to listen to the word of God. He then arrived at Sapur, which is a short day's distance from Tailur. "Sapur," he remarks, "was formerly a large town, now it is a small

1. One who wears the lingam or phallus, an adorer of Siva.

village." He met there a great many Tamil people who had settled there many years before. "They listened to me with attention and asked to be instructed."

The same day, still travelling west, Father Mauduit reached Colalam. The Moors were in possession. It was once one of the most important places in India. "Even now," he adds, "it is densely populated." He had considerable difficulty in entering the town, and still more to find a house. The family who gave him a hospitable lodging listened with great interest, especially the women. They said that if their husbands would embrace the Christian religion they were quite ready to follow. The custom of this country, he remarks, demands that the women must follow the religion of the men. He had a religious dispute with a Brahmin, who, having been worsted in the debate, returned to the attack accompanied by a Moor, who had travelled a good deal and who, having lived three years at Goa, knew the Europeans and their mode of life. This Moor stared a moment at the Priest and then cried in a loud voice, "This man is a Prangi!" "This so unexpected remark came to me like a thunderclap," says Father Mauduit; "I knew that, if I were held to be such, all my plans would come to nought."

One of the principal inhabitants had promised to build a house for the Priest. But the Moor's comment had gone abroad in the town, and though they still treated the Father with respect, his hopes of fixing a permanent mission station among them were thereby

frustrated. This adverse circumstance made him change his plan of continuing his journey westward. There seemed to be no prospect of success among a people subject to the Moors. Those under the Poligars or native rulers, he thought, would give him a better chance. He therefore regretfully left this important town, where he had expected to effect so much good, turned towards the North, and halted next day at Sonnakallu, some 30 miles N. N. E. Here he found some well-disposed people, who asked for a catechist to instruct them; whence he proceeded to Ramasamudram. Halting outside the village, he met a widow, who, hearing of the heavenly message he had come to deliver to the people, promised within a few months to build a house for him in the village.

But Providence directing his steps, he now reached Punganur, where the first of the Telugus were to be regenerated in the waters of baptism. Punganur, he tells us, is a large and well-populated town, but very dirty and badly built. His first care was to call on the Avildar or Prime Minister of this kingdom. He found him surrounded by a great many Brahmins, but was received with great civility. The prince, a young lad, always remained inside the fort with his mother. Father Mauduit was told that he could not see the prince until the solemnities of a feast they were then celebrating were over. This caused him to stay longer than he would have wished. He began to preach in the centre of this town. The people came to listen attentively, but the greater part

being Lingaites, their hearts remained untouched. "Only a solitary widow with her four children," he writes, in a somewhat disappointed tone, "listened to me," not aware that he was laying the foundation for innumerable conversions to follow. "There was," he adds, "a very nice-looking young man, the servant of a Moor, who resolved to quit his master, and, returning to his country, embrace the Christian Religion." After about a fortnight's sojourn in Punganur, the Avildar gave the priest permission to build a church in any place he might choose. Father Mauduit was anxious to see the young prince and have a personal interview with the mother, who was reputed to be an excellent woman. But all efforts in that direction failed, which he ascribes to his not having the wherewithal to make the customary presents.

Before leaving Punganur, three of the children of the aforesaid widow were baptised. As for the woman herself, who had been a staunch Lingaite for so many years, Father Mauduit thought it prudent to postpone her baptism and try her for some time. He took the eldest son into his service. He was a promising youth, who spoke several languages, and being able to read and write both Telugu and Tamil, was destined to become a useful catechist.

It is highly probable, we might almost say certain, that this family belonged to the Yelama caste. We are led to draw this inference from the fact that the office of catechist was filled from the earliest times by this particular caste of the Punganur Christians—an

honour which the present Yelama Christians at Punganur still boast of as having been the special privilege of their ancestors. Besides, the Jesuit Fathers of those days tell us again and again in their letters that they took none but Brahmins and high caste Christians into their domestic service.

Father Mauduit's great ambition now was to visit Tirupati, one of the most famous pagan shrines in India. How great were his longings to establish the religion of Christ within this stronghold of Satan. Vast crowds of pilgrims were just then flocking to this renowned temple. But the Moors, who now overran the country in all directions, might possibly frustrate his designs and perhaps entirely ruin his work by declaring him to be a Prangi, as they had done at Colalam. Among crowds of strangers from all parts, this would have had the most fatal consequences. He therefore resolved on returning. God's designs had been accomplished. By a very circuitous route, to evade meeting the Moors, he made his way back *via* Tailur. As a proof, if proof were necessary, of how divine Providence seconded the efforts of this pioneer missionary, I may relate, among other things, a little incident that occurred on his return journey. Halting near a tank during the mid-day heat, an old woman of well-nigh a hundred years, came to see him, and enquired who this wonderful sanyasi was and what was the object of his coming from such a distant country. The truth of God's own message struck her so forcibly that she would not allow the priest to

proceed until he had poured the waters of redemption over her. A sudden outpouring of grace of this kind, and that, too, by the side of a tank, takes one's mind back to the first Christian era, when the eunuch of the Queen of the Ethiopians exclaimed, "*Ecce aqua, quid prohibet me baptizari?*"

From this summary of Father Mauduit's narrative we get a fair insight into the condition of the Telugu people and their disposition towards Christianity two hundred years ago. We learn also how the missionary ingratiated himself with even the highest classes of the people. The conversion of the Telugus was begun in very troublesome times, and we are inclined to believe, with the Fathers of those days, that, if the conversion of the Carnatic had been undertaken years before, the results would have been still more marvellous. We find no aversion to speak of on the part of the Hindus, of whatever class or rank. Everywhere the missionary is received with reverence and respect. It seems in fact as if the whole country were ripe for the Gospel of peace and that the only barrier in the way was the unfortunate invasion of the Moors. We shall, however, see in the sequence, that promising as the prospects were for the evangelisation of the country, the Mahomedans were not the only, nor the greatest, opponents to the introduction of the Christian religion, when once the work of evangelisation had begun in earnest. The Dasaries, a fanatic class of pagans in those days, and even the petty Rajahs, influenced and incited by jealous Brahmins, proved to be

an incessant worry to the Catholic Missionary and a formidable obstacle to the spread of the faith.

Nevertheless, we stand amazed at the rapid advance and marvellous growth of the Christian religion within the short space of thirty years. By the year 1736, there were already thousands of Telugu Christians of all castes spread over many villages throughout the Carnatic. Churches and chapels sprang up on all sides as we can see from the map made then by the Jesuits, and of which a copy accompanies this volume. The torch of the Gospel was carried right into the heart of the Telugu country as far north as Anantapur, and to the east across the Cambam hills into the Vencata-giri Rajah's territory.

Under divine Providence we must ascribe this wonderful success to the indefatigable zeal and devotion of the Jesuits; though it remains true that, notwithstanding the many obstacles, the times were by far more favourable for the reception of the truth than they are now. Father Mauduit's excursion into the Telugu country shows us, not only what manner of life he lived, but also the high esteem and respect the people then had for the Catholic priest. Dare we now so much as enter a pagoda or the dwelling of a Brahmin? Would a pagan Sudra, let alone the timid and superstitious Komati—Telugu merchant,—receive us as guests into his house and allow us to say Mass and preach to an eager crowd under his hospitable roof? Nor let us forget to observe the number of catechists the priest of those days had at his disposal

These were Brahmins or respectable men of high caste, who were well paid, as we shall see in due course. Father Mauduit could not have had less than a dozen with him on his comparatively short tour.

CHAPTER II.

The manner in which the new mission was started, what progress was made, and what advances and reverses those zealous pioneers met with in their noble enterprise, will, no doubt, be seen best from the following two letters written by their Superior at Pondicherry, the Very Rev. Father Tachard to

M. LE COMTE DE CRÉCY,

à Pondicherry le 4 Février 1703.¹

It is but right that I should give you particulars of the first fruits of our French mission in the Carnatic, because the establishment of this new mission, so important for the spread of the Gospel and for the conversion of several nations, owes its existence to the zeal, ability and firmness, with which you have saved for us, by the treaty of peace, the fort and our house at Pondicherry, from which go forth with the blessings of Heaven apostolic men to labour in the neighbouring countries.

After the destruction of our mission in Siam, whose loss you so sensibly felt, most of our fathers withdrew to Pondicherry on the Coromandel Coast, where I made them join me after my third journey to

1. *Lettres Edif. et Cur.* vol. 6, page 192.

France. Surrounded, as we were, to the West and to the North by innumerable idolators, we were fired by the desire to work for their conversion. The immense progress which the Portuguese Jesuits had made in the South, where they have formed Christian communities numbering in all over 200,000 souls, made us sanguine that, by adopting the same means for the conversion of the Northern peoples, we could expect in time the same blessings from our Divine Lord.

We began, then, by establishing ourselves at Pondicherry, but the Dutch having expelled us when we had scarcely settled down and just begun opening the new church we had built for divine service, our hopes were on the point of being frustrated, had not Providence intervened and placed in your hands the timely conclusion of a general peace. It was, sir, through your good services that Pondicherry was recovered by the Royal Company, and you became thereby the restorer of our tottering mission, of which in so many respects you were already the generous benefactor with that same liberality which you have always shown to all our missions whether in the Levant, the Indies, or in China.

When I arrived at Pondicherry on my fifth voyage, I found that Father Mauduit, after having learned the language and the customs of the people in the Madura Mission, had already established himself at Carveypondi, a town about 90 or 100 miles north-west from here. He had then, since his arrival, already baptized a hundred people. This same Father had

made several excursions and successful attempts in the neighbouring countries, especially to the north-west, where he preached the Gospel at different stations and baptized a few souls. During those apostolic travels he laid the foundations of the faith at Thakkōlam,¹ which, in early days, was the centre of idolatry in the Carnatic, and of the church of Ponganur, a large town well populated, about 150 miles from Pondicherry, where he had the happiness of baptizing over 80 idolators.²

Before leaving Europe this last time I had obtained leave from the Father General to recall Father Bouchet from Madura that he might join in the work of our new French Mission.

This Father, after the revolution in Siam, had joined the Malabar province and worked with great zeal and success in the Madura Mission, where his efforts were so blessed by God that, since his arrival he had baptized over twenty thousand souls and built a church at Aur, twelve miles from Trichinopoly, the present capital of the province. As soon as he was informed of the will of his superiors, he readily prepared to leave so endearing a place, notwithstanding the tears and entreaties of his dear neophytes. I felt it a hard task to draw him away from such a fruitful soil, but we absolutely required a man of his experience and intelligence in order to establish our new

1. Thakkōlam—N. Arcot near Arkonam.

2. This shows Fr. Mauduit must have returned to Punganur onso after his first successful visit.

mission in the Carnatic on a firm footing and to render our attempt at conversions efficacious and successful. Father Bouchet brought with him from Aur another French missionary, Father de la Fontaine, whom he had trained himself. So that, by March 1702, we had three priests in the Kingdom of the Carnatic. Father Bouchet was placed at the head of this new undertaking. As you will see from what follows, it would have been difficult to find a better man. He fixed his head-quarters at Thakkolam, and having left Father Mauduit to continue his work at Carveypondi, he sent Father de la Fontaine to Ponganur, where the Telugu language is spoken, which is as different from Malabar (Tamil) as Spanish is from French.

These men, before entering upon their new mission field, assembled at Carveypondi and there resolved to adopt the dress and the mode of life of Brahmin Sanyasis—religious penitents. This meant a life of great austerity, hardly bearable unless sustained by apostolic zeal and charity. Besides abstinence from all that has had life, such as flesh, fish and eggs, the Brahmin sanyasis have to follow a very trying and irksome rule of life. They are obliged to bathe every morning in a public tank, and take again a similar bath before their meals which can be taken only once a day. It is necessary, besides, to have Brahmin cooks, for it would be degrading to partake of anything prepared by one of any other caste. This state, moreover, obliges them to live in great retirement. Except to go out for the sake of his

disciples or for the good of his neighbour, a sanyasi is not supposed to leave his hermitage; not to mention other troublesome regulations, which a sanyasi must rigorously observe if he wishes to labour with success for the souls of these poor Indians.

When the kings of Golkonda were masters of the country, Thakkōlam was an important town. Up till thirty years ago it was so still: but, since the Moors have taken possession of it by the conquest of the Kingdom of Golkonda, it has considerably gone down in power and wealth. If we accept the fabulous tradition of the pagans, this town in ancient times was so beautiful, so fair, that the gods, when it pleased them to visit this earth, held their councils there. When the Moors occupied the town, finding it almost entirely deserted by its former inhabitants, who had fled to evade the avarice and cruelty of their conquerors, they razed to the ground all those magnificent temples of which the town had reason to be proud, leaving only the principal pagoda which they utilised as a sort of fortress for the protection of a small garrison to guard the place.

The enormous extent of country subjugated by the great Mogul, and the infinite number of towns taken possession of, did not permit him to appoint as governors men of his own faith, which is that of Mahomed. He, therefore, confided nearly all the towns of minor importance to the pagans; and he has reason to be satisfied, for they serve him well.

To reward the services of his "Omeros," who are the *grandees* of his empire, the Emperor assigns to them for the term of their lifetime the sovereignty over certain provinces, with the provision that they shall maintain in their armies a given number of horsemen for his use when required. Powerful though these governors be, they have superintendents over them, called *Diwans*, whose office corresponds to that of "*intendants*" in our provinces of France. The business of these *Diwans*, who are independent of the Governors or Omeros, is to levy the Emperor's taxes and to see that these petty governors do not give themselves to excessive injustices—not a very rare occurrence. The governor-general of *Conjeeveram*, in whose dependency *Thakkolam* lies, is called *Daoorkhan*¹. He is a man of large fortune, risen to his present position by his merits, and who, having rendered valuable services to the Mogul, obtained from him *Thakkōlam* in the manner above described. *Daoorkhan* has appointed to superintend this large town five overseers, who are called *Gramani* (headmen). The principal of these possessed a *tope* near *Thakkōlam*, which he gave to Father Bouchet, who has built there a church and a small house and made it his headquarters.

The rumour of a holy penitent living near *Thakkōlam* soon spread through the town and neighbouring villages. The *Gramani*¹, his benefactor, was the

1. *Dāudkhan*.

2. *Gramani* = Village Magistrate or *Munsif*.

first to visit him. Father Bouchet, who knows the language and the customs of the country to perfection, received him with such kindness and tact that the Gramani was quite pleased with the Sanyasy's polite manners and erudite conversation. One who is not aware of the natural curiosity of the Indians, would hardly believe what the Father wrote to me regarding the crowds of people visiting his hermitage from morning till night. He told me he could scarcely find time to say his breviary or to take his meals. These visits were frequently put a stop to by the jealousy of the Brahmins and the Yogis, who spread the rumour that the Sanyasy was one of the Prangis who live along the coast, that he drank liquor in secret, ate meat with his disciples and committed all sorts of wickedness. Calumnies of this kind, to which, perhaps, some colour is given because of the sanyasy's fair complexion, have often cooled down the ardour of those who were attending his instructions. Fortunately, however, the Gramani, his benefactor, after four or five months of close investigation into the austere and holy life of the Priest, was converted. He held many a dispute with the sanyasy on religious subjects and argued for a long time. But finally, convinced of the truth, he submitted himself, and is now, I am assured, a fervent Christian.

These pernicious rumours, so detrimental to the cause of religion, were suddenly put a stop to by two unexpected but important visits which the sanyasy received in his solitary abode. The first, which

contributed most towards abating the calumny of the Brahmins, was from no less a person than the Diwan of Daoorkhan, a celebrated Brahmin. There are, be it observed, different ranks of nobility among the Brahmins, very much like those of the higher classes in Europe. This Diwan belongs to the Tatuwadis' branch, which is the highest in that caste. He had a long conversation with the Priest, with the result that he fully agreed to and approved of a creed whose fundamental doctrine consists in adoring but one God. The second visit was even more important and advantageous to our holy religion. Daoorkhan, governor-general of the Carnatic, as said above, has adopted a Rajput, named Sek, and appointed him his lieutenant-general. Vellore, the last stronghold of the Mahra-ttas, which the Moors had besieged since several months, was on the point of surrendering, (which it actually did two months ago), when his father ordered Sek to proceed thither. On his way he passed through Thakkōlam and paid a visit to the sanyasy, of whose wonderful retirement and holy life he had been informed. In this country visits of high personages are accompanied with all the ceremony and pomp required by their rank. Accordingly, Sek arrived at the hermitage with the beating of drums and attended by a large detachment of foot soldiers and cavalry. He treated the sanyasy with the utmost respect, offered him lands, assured him of his protection and after recommending himself and the object of his

mission to his prayers, mounted his horse and proceeded on his journey.

Since that time the Prangi scare, which implies that one is a European and without caste, has subsided. The pagans, witnessing the high honour their masters and conquerors bestowed on the sanyasy, now began likewise to show great reverence for him and his holy doctrine.

The governor of Thakkōlam soon paid his respects, and all the inhabitants of the town followed his example; with the result that our holy religion is no more looked upon with disfavour. On the contrary, every one is now eager to be instructed in the law of God. We must, however, await in patience to see the good seed now sown spring up and fructify. For the manifold obstacles, which bar the salvation of these pagans, are well-nigh insurmountable.

Father Mauduit, having established two Mission stations, one at Carveypondi and one at Erudurgam, a town about 90 miles to the N.-West of Pondicherry, has set himself to the study of the *Grandham*¹, which is the language of the learned in this country. To render his ministry among the Indians successful, it is necessary for the priest to understand their books, which are written in that language, and to be well versed in the sciences which the learned profess. The Brahmins, who pretend to have an exclusive right to this deposit of learning, do not permit the

1. Sanskrit.

authors thereof to be translated. Besides, aware that their prestige and superiority entirely rests upon their knowledge, they are unspeakably jealous of this science ¹.

Father de la Fontaine's labours have been crowned from the beginning with extraordinary success. With great tact he has gained the goodwill of the Rajah of Punganur where he has fixed his headquarters, as well as of the princess, the Rajah's grandmother, who is regent during his minority. Besides hundred adults, all of good caste, he numbers nine Brahmins among his neophytes; that is to say, that he alone has baptized in eight months more Brahmin adults than all the Missionaries of Madura in ten years. If these conversions continue, as we have reason to hope, we may well call him the Apostle of the Brahmins, and if it pleases God to give the grace to a great number of this learned class, the other castes will be easily converted. I am not, however, without my fears that so great a success in the beginning may not be followed by some violent persecution, which might ruin all our expectations. But God is the Master: we can only conform ourselves in everything to His holy will. About five or six days ago two more priests have joined the three first Missionaries. Let us hope that our divine Lord will accord them the same success.

1. The Vedas were obtained through the Brahmin converts. *Lettres Edif. et Cur.*, vol. 7, page 506.

These, then, sir, are a few particulars regarding the apostolic conquests made by our Missionaries whom you assist so liberally with your alms. If their prayers and those of their neophytes be heard, as no doubt they will, what then will not be the blessings from a heavenly Father who rewards a glass of water given to His servants? Superfluous to mention that I heartily join my poor prayers to those of these Apostolic men, but I hasten to assure you that there is not one who cherishes a higher respect for or holds you in more grateful remembrance than

Yours, etc.

Letter of Father Tachard, Superior General of the French Missionaries of the Company of Jesus, to the Very Reverend Father de la Chaise of the same Company, confessor to the King ¹

à Pondichéry le 30 Septembre 1703.

Very Reverend Father, P. C.

We have till now been expecting the arrival of a ship from France; but, though the season is already advanced, none has as yet made its appearance, and we do not know if any will come this year. This uncertainty obliges me to send my letter by a Danish ship, which is the only one returning to Europe.

Our mission in the Kingdom of the Carnatic begins to take firm root. We have at present four excellent Missionaries working in that vast field

1. *Lettres Edif. et Cur.*, vol. 6, page 201.

with Father Bouchet, who made so many conversions in the Madura Mission, as Superior. The other three are FF. Mauduit, de la Fontaine, and Petit-Father de la Breuille, who had also consecrated himself to that Mission, fell seriously ill, so that I had to recall him to Pondicherry. Nor does his delicate state of health permit me to expose him a second time to so hard and laborious a life.

This year a petty persecution has been raised against Father Bouchet. He and his catechists were thrown into prison. He was threatened to be burned alive and to undergo the most horrible torments. They were about wrapping his hands in cotton dipped in oil, and threatened to set fire to it, when, by some special intervention of Providence, the judges suddenly changed their minds and desisted from carrying out so terrible a punishment. Every now and again they showed red-hot irons threatening to torment his body, but his affable manners and the sweetness of his temper conquered the fury of his executioners. When he was arrested, they seized his chapel and all the little belongings of his hermitage and laid hands on the funds which he kept for the support of himself, the Fathers and the Catechists. After passing a month in prison, during which time his only nourishment was a little milk given to him in a wooden vessel, he and a few of his Christians, who had shared the same fate, were set at liberty; but nothing was restored of all that was taken from him. So that we had to come to his aid as best we could.

His cheerful disposition and holy resignation during these days of trial have done honour to our holy religion and greatly fortified the Christians, who were much edified by the patience and joy which radiated from his countenance.

Also, Father de la Fontaine has had to experience the opprobrium of our Saviour's cross. The Brahmins of Punganur, jealous of his wonderful success, resolved to turn him out of his hermitage with insult and ignominy. For this purpose they bought over some neophytes of their caste to accuse him of using wine at the sacrifice of the Mass, which, among those people, is considered an enormous crime¹. After many affronts and painful humiliations, from which our Lord has known to draw His glory, the persecution ceased, and the Father now works again at the conversion of the pagans with even greater success than before.

As for Father Petit, who does not yet know the language well enough², he lives in a sort of desert to learn the same thoroughly, to accustom himself to the odd habits of these people and to the life of self-denial and privation which those missionaries have to lead.

Father Mauduit is at this very moment in prison and writes to me from his place of confinement: "I

1. This must be a slip of the Editors: the taking of wine for sacrifice would not constitute a transgression in the eyes of the Hindu; for any other purpose it would.

2. This shows how careful the Jesuits were about the study of the language. Father Petit was then already eight months in the country. He arrived Jan. 30, 1708.

and my good catechists have been beaten, scoffed at and almost done to death, but I am still alive and able to serve God if my sins do not make me unworthy of it. Every thing has been taken from me. I beg of you to assist me."

This sorrowful news has pierced my heart. But what pains me still more, is my utter inability to help this poor captive of Jesus Christ. We have set about selling our furniture and the little we possess of mathematical instruments so as to meet in some way these urgent demands.

The Fathers Quémin, Papin and Baudré are in Bengal where there is no lack of work. Father de la Breuille, who returned from the Carnatic, is teaching Philosophy. Father Dolu has charge of the Malabar (Tamil) parish. Father de la Lane, who arrived by one of the last ships, is studying the language, and preparing to enter the mission next year. Fr. Turpin does useful work among the pagans of this town and teaches Latin to a few French and Portuguese youths who are preparing for the ecclesiastical profession. Brother Moricet is teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Pilotage and other sciences to the children, who will afterwards thereby be enabled to gain a living¹. We do our best to educate these youths well and to inspire them with the fear of God.

1. The Jesuits taught the art of pilotage. Father Tachard travelled on a ship to Bengal piloted by one of their former pupils. *L. Edif et Cur.*

Our Lord has singularly blessed our work this year. We had over three hundred baptisms in our church. The town of Pondicherry is increasing every day. It numbers 30,000 inhabitants, and of these only about two thousand are Christians. We hope that with the grace of God the greater part of these people will in a few years embrace Christianity. We are trying our best and spare neither work nor pains. If any French vessels should call here this year, I shall write more fully. Meanwhile accept, etc.

It may, perhaps, be of greater interest to the general public, if we place before them the report of the persecution, above alluded to, as given by Father Bouchet himself. It will give them a better insight into the state of affairs at the very commencement, the enormous difficulties the Missionaries had to contend with at the very onset, the trials and tribulations of the first Christians in the Carnatic and the fierce opposition of the Brahmins to the introduction of Christianity.

Thakkōlam, though a Tamil town, lies near the outskirts of the Telugu country¹. It was the headquarters of the first Superior, who directed the work of evangelisation among the Telugu people, and hence it can hardly be considered as lying outside the scope of this historical review.

The letter is excessively long, as minute details, such as asked for by the addressee, must necessarily make it; but it seems perferable to give it *in extenso*

1. North Arcot, about 9 miles south of Arkonam.

rather than to diminish or detract from its interest by mere cuttings or extracts.

Letter of Father Bouchet, Missionary of the Company of Jesus to Mr. Cochet de Saint-Vallier, "Président des requêtes du palais², à Paris":—

1. Some months after the above was written, the "*Storia do Mogor*" by Niccolao Manucci was published by W. Irvine.

Manucci, as will be admitted by all who are acquainted with India in the past, is a story-teller whose imagination often got the better of his wits, especially when entering into details received secondhand, such as well-nigh all his information appears to be.

One who has read Bernier, his contemporary, cannot but be struck by the simple statement of the truth by the one and the exaggerated and often slanderous concoctions of the other.

The impression left after going through his laborious four volumes is that he, Manucci, was about the only foreigner of those days who went through his adventures unscathed: everybody else—especially priests and monks—were more or less vagabonds.

We have no hesitation in saying that many of his statements are incorrect, and when he treats of the Jesuits, his rancour is too awful for words. That zealous and learned body of men is quite capable of taking care of themselves. But, when treating of these very times, it would be unfair to pass over in silence unwarrantable accusations, such as Manucci in his malice has been pleased to make. A correct insight into the history of those times will dispel the unfavorable impression Manucci's newly edited *Storia* is likely to make. The letters here published, written by some of the Fathers of that period, will convince even the most biassed of the fact that the Jesuits had no other aim than the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and that too, in total disregard of their own interests.

Place, for instance, the record of a saintly man like Fr. Bouchet or that of Fr. de la Fontaine, a French nobleman, by the side of this time-serving adventurer, and we need no other proof of where the truth lies.

2. No date given—*Lett. Edif. et Cur.*, vol. 6, p. 422.

Monsieur,

La paix de N. S.

It is indeed consoling for a missionary who has devoted his life to the salvation of infidels at the extremities of the world, to be remembered by an official of your merit and standing, and to find that not only is he not forgotten, but that you should take so much interest in his work and should wish to be informed of the success with which God has blessed his efforts. Your solicitude for the advancement of religion has no doubt prompted you more than aught else to honour me with these marks of your friendship, which, however, I gratefully acknowledge, are not the first I have received at your hands; and this, too, is the reason of your desire to learn in detail regarding the persecution which the Christians of Thakkōlam had to suffer when the faith had only just been preached to them. A casual allusion to this event in a publication of some of our letters has urged your anxiety for more particulars. I am happy to be able to satisfy your curiosity from the notes I took down at the time of all that occurred, and thus to give you in return a mark of my esteem and gratitude.

The pagans of Thakkōlam, capital¹ of the Carnatic, were spiteful of the happy beginnings of the Christian religion, which daily made more and more progress in the land. The principal leaders were constantly holding meetings to concert measures for the

1. It was the capital before the Moors took the country.

overthrow of Christianity before it should take too deep root. They considered the shortest and surest way for the success of their plans was to report me to the Sek-Sahib, Governor of the whole province, and to excite his avidity by persuading him of my being in possession of a secret to make gold, to tell him I was immensely rich and that, if he wished to increase his wealth, he had only to lay hold of my person and by enforced imprisonment extort the money from me. They brought other accusations, such as my utter disregard for the gods of the country, but these made no impression on the Governor, a Moor who laughs at the pagan superstitions.

An event now happened which tended to hasten the execution of their evil designs. It is the custom among them to have a solemn sacrifice offered to the sun at the beginning of the year. This is followed by feastings to which friends and relatives are invited. The Gramani ("premier juge¹") of Thakkōlam, a recent convert, consulted the catechists as to the best course to be taken on that occasion. He knew that for him to assist or take part in the sacrifice was entirely out of the question. Feasting itself was harmless, as an expression of gladness at the opening of a new year. The catechists told him how, in the Madura Mission, the Christians, in order to avoid the suspicion of imitating pagan ceremonies, held their rejoicings three or four days earlier, began their feast with the singing

1. Village Magistrate or Munsif.

of hymns, and ended it with a general distribution of alms to the poor¹.

The Gramani likewise followed this very commendable expedient, and resolved that the feast should be carried out on a grand scale. He, therefore, constructed a large pandal in the yard in front of his house and set it off with coloured flags and buntings. The catechists put up an altar in the middle of this pandal, placing on it a statue of our Lady. They adorned it with flowers and a number of lights and burnt incense in several vessels. The band was brought into requisition, and after singing some pious hymns, followed a small pyrotechnical show.

A great number of people gathered in front of the Gramani's house where all the Christians had assembled. The catechists took this opportunity to speak to the multitude on the truths of religion and the folly of offering sacrifice to the sun as all adoration is due only to the God of the universe. Most people were touched by what they heard and witnessed. But there were also a few bitter enemies of the Christian name, who now began openly to give vent to their rage. They soon succeeded in gaining over the very relations of the Gramani and prevented his henceforth receiving the honours due to him as head of the town, declaring that he had lost his caste.

1. This example alone is sufficient to disprove Manuccis accusation of the Jesuits making idolators of the Christians. In fact, Manucci stultifies himself, for, on his supposition the pagans should not have been adverse to Christianity.

This was the extent to which they themselves could go to wreak their wrath. We shall now relate their secret plottings against him and the Christians by engaging the interests of the Moors.

A fit occasion was not long in coming. Sek-Sahib visited Thakkōlam. The very next morning they hastened to give him the most odious reports against the Christians, not failing to impress upon him that now was his chance of getting at my wealth by making me a prisoner. These representations tickled the ear of the avaricious governor. That very day he sent for the captain of the guard and made him and his men responsible in case of my escape by stealth from Thakkōlam.

The following day a few of the guards, under some plausible pretext or other, came to the *tope* where I had my church ; nor did they leave till I was taken into custody. To have some excuse for visiting me and in order to disguise their evil designs, two of these men pretended to be anxious to become Christians. They attended my instructions most punctually and feigned much more earnestness than the other catechumens. I was really charmed with their fervour and candidly confess I had not the remotest suspicion of their evil intent until information was brought me that Fathers de la Breuille and Petit were on their way to Thakkōlam. I decided to go and meet them at Carveypondi and ordered one of my catechists to hold himself in readiness to accompany me. One of the guards, who was somewhat late that evening,

perceiving that we were making preparations for my departure, hastened to inform the captain. The latter was, however, away from town. A messenger was sent to him post-haste at midnight, and the captain mounting his horse arrived at daybreak with his soldiers at the *tope*. He began by creating a noise at my "cabin," and ordered his men, who were armed with muskets, to be ready in case of any resistance. He then sent word to me that, as he was on his way to Arkaru (Arcot), he wished to see me before proceeding on his way. At once I went out to meet him. After the exchange of a few polite words, he told me that he was very sorry to inform me that the Sek-Sahib was not well pleased with me regarding some of the things which had been reported to him; and saying so, he ordered his soldiers to despoil the Christians and the catechists.

When I saw they were really in earnest, I remonstrated with him as to the calumnies invented solely to pervert the mind of the Sek-Sahib, and I told him we were quite aware of the base motives which prompted the pagans, in their hatred of the religion I preached, to bring these false accusations against us. Were they then ignorant of the permission granted us by the great Pasha (the Mogul Emperor) that we were at liberty to make open profession of our faith in his dominions. If they were to use force, they must remember his lieutenant-general Dacorkhan¹ would be made cognisant of their doings, and no doubt, he

1. Däud Khan.

would see justice done. Then I turned towards the authors of this persecution, and said, "If you think that by raising these tumults against us you will put obstacles to the spread of Christianity, you are very much mistaken. On the contrary, remember that, besides the chatisements base attempts of this kind will call down upon you, far from succeeding in your plans, whatever you do to stifle Christianity in its birth, will only serve to accelerate its growth. Take a lesson from these palms yonder : the more one tries to bend them towards the ground, the loftier they lift their heads towards heaven. It is the same with the holy law I have come to announce to you : the more you venture to destroy it, the deeper it will take root."

I received no other reply than that from the captain, a Rajaput, who repeated that he was an officer of Sek-Sahib and had to obey orders. One of my catechists, who then spoke with all the fervour of a Christian, was immediately ill-treated by the soldiers, who lashed him severely with their chabook (a species of whip). The catechist bore this insult with Christian resignation, and merely said : "Take my life, I am ready to die for the cause of Christ."

They then commenced robbing the Christians of all they possessed, and dragging them along with violence, locked them in the church. I entered my little house, and seeing them ready to pounce upon my little belongings, I seized my breviary and quietly started saying my office under the shadow of a tree. Fortunately I felt so calm and composed that nothing

disturbed me in my prayers. They stood amazed at this and remarked, "This must be a wonderful man, he is no more troubled about us than if we were pillaging the house of his enemy." All my altar furniture and some European articles were snatched away, as well as the box which contained the alms I had received from France for the support of the mission.

After finishing my office, I walked up to the captain, asking him to allow me to keep the two statues of our Lord and of our Lady. These were ornamented with coloured stones, which they had taken to be precious stones. Seeing, however, their mistake, they surrendered them as well as a few books of devotion which proved of great service in my prison.

The Gramani then came up to sympathise with me in the disgrace I was exposed to. In the hearing of the pagans I spoke a few words of encouragement to him and reminded him that the loss of his goods and even of his life was nothing compared to the infinite reward stored up for him. As I was still speaking the captain mounted his horse, and this was the signal for my arrest. The soldiers and guards surrounded me to conduct me to the jail.

A trumpet was sounded, which made all the people of Thakkōlam come forth from their houses to witness this spectacle. The whole length of the road and the streets of Thakkōlam was one mass of pagans. I heard shouts of triumph, of reproach and invectives. "There now," they cried, "is the man who insults our gods. He richly deserves this punishment. If his

religion were true, would he thus be insulted ? Has ever before a sanyasy been taken to prison with the approving acclamations of the people ?” There were some, however, who were touched, and with fear spoke of the vengeance from Heaven which would visit their town for so enormous a crime.

Through the midst of this uproarious crowd I was taken to the *Tsāvadi* (public village hall). The people thought I was to be questioned here, but the captain had led me hither, the longer to expose me to the gaze of the people. From thence they made me march through a long street at the end of which is the fortress, which, thanks be to God, I entered with a calm and serene countenance. A large Mandapam (a vaulted room, which has no other aperture for the light than the door) was assigned me as my place of confinement.

A little while after I observed several Christians being brought in. I had no idea that they also were to be made prisoners. Moved with compassion, I begged the officer to set them free, and told him I would be responsible for them as well as for myself.

But my prayers were of no avail. We were, in all, twenty-four persons, lodged in the fort. Let me at once hasten to give this testimony to these brave Christians, that they not only did not waver in the least in their faith, but they showed a courage worthy of the Christians of the primitive Church.

Allow me, sir, to make known to you some of these generous neophytes. You will be edified by

their constancy and render thanks to God, who has inspired them with such courage.

There were three Brahmins and one Brahmināti¹. The oldest of these Brahmins had formerly been a most ardent idolator. His zeal went so far as to make him take a vow to raise a temple to the false gods he adored. Not having the means to carry out his promise, he resolved to go about the country as a Pandaram (penitent), thus to excite the generosity of the public by the practice of great austerities. For this purpose he ordered two iron plates to be made and had them fastened round his neck, riveted at both ends, depriving himself thereby of the possibility of undoing them. These plates were two cubits long and one cubit wide. It was impossible for him to rest at night unless some one placed a high pillow under his head. In this manner he travelled through several provinces accompanied by three or four Brahmins and five or six Sudras to collect alms from the people. His collections amounted to seven hundred *écus*,² when he arrived at Kottati,³ where he met Fathers Maynard and Martin. Kottati is a celebrated town remarkable for having, in times past, sheltered within its walls Saint Francis Xavier, who wrought wonderful conversions there and is doing so still. The Brahmin had several interviews with the Missionaries and with their catechists. After many discussions, which easily persuaded him of the fallacy of his gods, his eyes were opened to

1. Brahmin widow.

2. = $2\frac{1}{2}$ shillings, or about 1300 Rupees of our present currency.

3. Now Kottar, in the diocese of Quilon.

the light of truth and he was convinced that it was the God of the Christians he must adore. He began to perceive that the ostentatious extravagance of his penitential life was profitless, threw off the cumbersome weight, and being sufficiently instructed, asked to be received into the fold.

The priests were, however, of the opinion not to accord his wish so soon, and sent him back to his own country to see how he would conduct himself among his own people. The rumour of his intention to become a Christian had already gone before him. The Brahmins hearing of his arrival went out to meet him and overwhelmed him with caresses in order to make him change his mind. But, seeing their entreaties had no effect, they betook themselves to a most shameful treatment. They accused him to the Maniakaren (superintendent of the province) of having appropriated to his own use 500 *écus* of the alms collected for the building of the temple. His house was at once ransacked. His wife, who, for security's sake, had placed some of her jewels with a friend, was betrayed, and everything was handed to the governor. The poor catechumen was imprisoned and made to suffer several tortures to induce him to give up the money the Brahmins said he had taken.

Before, however, taking these extreme measures, the Brahmins had called their chief *guru* from Trichinopoly to induce the catechumen to apostatise. But the latter, to confound them, publicly revealed some of the shameful, secret ceremonies practised

by them. This embittered the Brahmins still more, and hence their having recourse to those cruel measures. They then drove him, his wife and his children out of the town. These poor people, now perfectly destitute, were, however, well received in another large village. But the Brahmins, hearing of this, despatched two of their caste to expel them from there. Not knowing which way to turn, they betook themselves to Tirunelveli at the other extremity of Madura, where some of his wife's relatives lived. The Brahmins pursued them even there. One of them having died suddenly, he (the catechumen) was accused of having caused his death by sorcery. This made matters still worse, so that he was forced to leave the province altogether. Gnānaprakāshaiyer—this was the name given him in Baptism—now took refuge towards the Coromandel coast. He lodged under a tree, when one day his father-in-law came to take away his daughter to deliver her from the disgrace her husband had brought upon her. Gnana-prakashaiyer, who had no desire to make his wife suffer on his account, allowed her to depart without raising great difficulties. The children followed the mother. And now this brave catechumen, like another Eustachius, deprived of wife and children and persecuted everywhere, presented himself to Father Simon Carvalho, an old Madura Missionary, who received him as a zealous confessor of Jesus Christ and conferred on him the sacrament of Baptism.

It was about that time that I wrote to Madura to send me some Brahmins who should be able to help me in my work as catechists. Their choice fell on this neophyte. He had scarcely been a fortnight with me, when he was taken prisoner and locked up with me in the same fortress. Here was the crowning test of his perseverance. This great servant of God, on this as on all other occasions, manifested the greatest fortitude and courage.

The second Brahmin was a young man of about fifteen or sixteen years of age, whom I had brought up from his childhood at Aur. His mother is a real saint. If she continues in the practice of her devotions as she has been doing now for many years, we have reason to believe that she will be carried to her grave in her baptismal innocence. I had sent this young Brahmin to assist Father de la Fontaine. He returned just a few days before my arrest. He fell ill immediately after his return, and when the fever was at its highest, he was made prisoner. They had the brutality of making him walk in the burning sun, taking no pity on his weak state of health. On reaching the fortress, he fell into a swoon, and was shortly after *in extremis*. I was much edified by his perfect resignation and his desire to be united with Christ.

The third Brahmin together with his mother was baptized by me at Thakkōlam. The mother is a splendid example of fervour and piety. She has never given the least sign of weakness, and was constantly

exhorting her companions to patience and forbearance in their sufferings, and encouraged them to be ready even to die, if God should demand that offering from them.

The oldest of my catechists, also a prisoner, has given from his youth the greatest marks of a lively faith. He has a mother whose patience has been more than once put to the severest test. Her husband, to force her to apostatise, ill-treated her for many years. The first thing he did was to cut off her hair, which is the greatest insult one can offer an Indian woman. From time to time he made her carry a lighted lamp on her head, which is another affront in this country. One night he let her down with her infant son in a dry well and left her there for five days. What cruelties had she not to endure ! But she met all these indignities with a true heroic patience. It is no doubt due to her prayers that God has granted in the end her husband's conversion. A protracted fever had brought him to an extreme state of weakness, so that his life was despaired of. His wife, seeing him in this hopeless state, began to pray with so much fervour for his conversion that she felt herself inspired to promise his recovery if he would become a Christian. Love of life made him consent to call for a catechist. His heart soon softened under the influence of the grace of God. He himself insisted on receiving Baptism, which, owing to his dangerous state, was conferred. That day the fever left him. In a short time he was restored to perfect health. He lived

many years afterwards, and persevered until his death as a very good Christian, deploring his past cruelties towards his good wife. It is this man's son who has suffered many persecutions at the hands of the pagans. His cheering words and good example greatly fortified the prisoners. Every day he went over to the women's quarters, where I could not well go, to encourage the poor prisoners with fervent exhortations.

The third catechist, quite a young lad, has, under these sore trials, shown a courage far above his strength and age. Most of the other prisoners were only recently baptized, some of them even were catechumens. One and all have endured the rigours and privations of prison with unshaken firmness.

A woman, who was one of the catechumens under instruction, but who escaped the vigilance of the guards, has had the courage to visit us constantly twice a day in order to bring us the charities she was able to collect for us among the better disposed in the town. All the prisoners looked upon her as a mother, and she in return considered them as her children. Her kind offices cost her many an insult from the pagans and cutting reproaches even from her own relatives. Whenever I saw her enter the jail, I was reminded of those holy Roman ladies who in the first ages of the church lavished their cares on the prisoners of Jesus Christ. She made use of her husband to carry our letters to the Fathers at Carveypondi and to bring their replies. The guards warned

her several times and threatened her with severe punishment if she dared carry our letters, but, nothing daunted, she contrived to dodge them and continued to take and bring our correspondence without fear.

The Gramani, of whom I spoke above, was a source of the greatest consolation to me because of his resolute behaviour. Instead of keeping out of the way, as he might have done when I was arrested, he remained at my side whilst I was being led through the town cursed and insulted by the pagans. As soon as I was secured in jail, they placed guards in and around his house, which so frightened his wife, that, in the attempt to scale the wall, she fell and hurt herself severely. His friends and relatives used all sorts of fair and foul means to make him renounce his faith, but he stood firm like a rock. At great risk to himself he visited me several times in my dungeon, when I took occasion to exhort and encourage him, and I was pleased to observe that day by day the grace of God made him a stronger Christian. I would never end were I to relate all the noble traits, of which in their zeal these new Christians showed themselves capable. Hence I shall pass on to what occurred during the time of my imprisonment.

As for myself, it was one continuous act of our holy ministry. In the morning, the men assembled in one place, the women in another. Our prayers ended with the recital of the rosary, after which I gave an

instruction to the men, whilst one of the catechists did the same for the women. During the day every one was busy gathering the little shrubs that grew wild in the prison yard. Not being supplied with firewood, these little dry sticks were carefully collected to cook the rice doled out to the prisoners. In the evening we had again prayers in common.

It proved a rigorous abstinence for these neophytes. Only one meal a day was allowed them, and that too, barely sufficient to still their hunger. After a few days one could hardly recognise them, and when they were released, they looked more like skeletons than living men.

Personally I resolved to do even without the rice and contented myself with some milk and a handful of "*avel*"¹. This is the manner of life of the great Indian penitents under similar circumstances. Without a special assistance from God, I could never have sustained so severe a task. In the end I contracted a dry cough, which, undoubtedly, would have ended my days had I been detained much longer in prison.

The guards, who feared that I might escape, were a source of great annoyance to us. They had been told that I was a magician able to raise myself up in the air and thus pass over the walls.

The second day of my imprisonment the captain came to tell me that he had orders to put chains on my feet. "No greater honour could be done me,"

1. Raw rice crushed in the husk when green.

I replied ; which so disconcerted him that he exclaimed, "I would consider it a crime to do so, come what may. What sort of people are those Christians that they should glory in being chained up !"

On the third day a Brahmin, a Rajah and a Rajaput came to me with a view to intimidate me with their threats. I boldly answered them that I was quite prepared for all this when I came to preach the gospel in this country. "I knew what aversion you have for the ministers of Jesus Christ and for the doctrine they teach ; your outrages, your dungeon, death even, will not alarm me. On the contrary, I shall count it a reward for my labours. You have a saying, that, to a man who has no fear of death, all the waters of the sea will not rise above his knees. Hence remember that to die for Christ I shall consider my happiest lot. You ask me where my treasures are hidden. Have you not already taken all I had in this world ? I know of no other treasures than those which are reserved in heaven and which I shall obtain, if you take my life."

These words, which God inspired me to speak out so bravely and bold, stirred the wrath of the Rajaput. "Very well," said he, "we shall not take your life, but try torments worse than death ;" and, describing the sort of sufferings I was to undergo, he added, "If this be not enough, we shall drive needles under your nails and wrap your hands in cotton dipped in oil and set fire to it. We shall see if you are proof against that sort of thing."

This Rajaput, who had a most fierce and hideous look, spoke in such firm tones, that I doubted not but that they would carry out their threats. When, however, they perceived they could extract nothing from me, they went over to the women's quarters and said : " Your priest is determined to die, but why should your husbands and children give away their lives? If you will indicate to us where your priest has hidden his treasures, it will be to your credit to have saved the lives of all."

Immediately after they had left, I exhorted all the Christian prisoners to stand firm in the hour of trial, which was now apparently fast approaching. About eight o'clock in the evening that same day, three catechists and a recent convert were laid in chains. They were fastened two by two. " Now, then," I exclaimed, " now you are indeed veritable confessors of Jesus Christ," and with tears in my eyes I reverently kissed their chains.

Meanwhile the money taken from me had been brought to Sek-Sahib. One of the town-watchmen, who was present, told us how he bit his lips when he saw this paltry sum, and turning to the Rajaput, said : " What has become of those immense treasures of the Christians they had promised to bring me. Is this handful of silver worth my being disgraced throughout the province. I know the evil reporters and they shall be punished."

The news of Sek-Sahib's disappointment, which soon spread through the whole town, still more

embittered our enemies, who, hoping yet to find the pretended treasures, determined to have recourse to torture.

A Badaga¹ was sent to interview us. Feigning compassion for us, this man tried to make us waver by telling us that even that very day we would be put to the torture.

And indeed, at about two o'clock in the day, we heard the trumpet sounding the arrival of the captain at the Tsâvadi. Two Brahmins and some Rajaputs were seated by his side. These were to be our judges. The catechists were called first. They were asked who I was and where the treasures were hidden. They then began to torture them by inserting their hands between two pieces of wood, which were violently pressed together by means of strong cords. Again they were questioned, but, receiving always the same answer, they now applied the same torture to the feet. The Rajaput, the same who had held out his threats to me, in order to enhance their sufferings, pulled himself the ropes with all his might so as to increase the pressure on their hands and feet. This torture is excessively painful. Several die under the process. It was for fear of this that they slackened the ropes a little to make them breathe. Two other catechists were treated in the same manner. During these proceedings they sent for the blacksmith, who was

1. A brahmin who reads the Vedas.

ordered to make his tongs red-hot for further torments to be applied to these poor men.

We, in our prison, were totally ignorant of what was taking place. We were at prayer when the guards came to fetch me. The Christians, fearing the worst, begged to be allowed to accompany me. A young man, Ajarapen by name, a relative of the Gramani, though ill, insisted with tears in his eyes to follow me and suffer with me whatever torments were to be inflicted. I would on no account hear of this, but asked them to pray that God might give me strength in this hour of trial.

The noise of my having been called to the Tsāvadi, spreading through the town, the streets were filled with people to see me pass. Some had compassion on me; others—and that the greater number—insulted me and said I had deserved the severest punishments for having despised their gods. On arriving at the Tsāvadi I saw my catechists stretched full length on the floor, their hands and feet squeezed in the manner described. Two men stood by their side with long chabooks ready to renew their fearful blows. In a corner sat the blacksmith heating the irons and blowing his bellows. The Brahmins and Rajaputs were seated on an elevated dais. I was made to stand before them. The oldest Brahmin then addressed me in the following words: “You see what your preaching has come to. You have exalted yourself above the Brahmins, and now you are abased and humbled at our feet. You have despised our gods and fallen into the

“hands of Sek-Sahib, who is the revenger of those insults. Behold the instruments for your torture.”

I replied that I felt obliged for his publicly avowing the motive of their action, namely, their hatred for the law I preached; and this being so, the greater the torments, the higher would be my reward in heaven. “Oh, oh!” sneered the Brahmin, “you assume that only you and your disciples will go to heaven. Do you mean to say that we who refuse to follow your doctrine will be damned?” On my replying that no other way led to heaven, the captain interrupted me and asked the Brahmin in Hindustani not to argue that point any further.

He now changed his tone and asked again, what had been repeated so often: “Where is the money?” “You insist,” I made answer, “upon obtaining from me what I do not possess. Where is your sense of justice to torture people for what they are unable to produce?” “We know,” said the Brahmin, “that you entice your disciples with the promise of money.” “If that be so,” I replied, “produce one witness to prove this accusation.” “Every one says so,” insisted the Brahmin. “Very well, then,” was my answer, “of the many you might at least produce one.” “It is the money we want,” cried he, “otherwise we shall continue torturing your disciples in your presence, and after that, we shall try you in the same manner.”

I kept silence. The catechists were then flogged. The fearful and redoubled blows of the chabook

nearly broke my heart. I shall never forget the sufferings I experienced at seeing these poor innocent men thus maltreated. Again the Brahmin repeated his request to me and pointed to the red-hot tongs. I became, as it were, bewildered and was unconscious of what was said. I thought the threat was to be executed, and if God had not sustained my strength, I would have swooned. What was therefore my surprise at finding myself being led into a neighbouring house, where the Brahmin with two others of his caste and the Rajaput tried privately to advise me to reveal the secret of my treasures. They said they themselves were sorry for the orders they had to carry out and hence spoke to me in private for fear of being reported to the Sek-Sahib. If I had not the money ready, I should promise to give it afterwards. "Your disciples," they said, "can easily assist you in procuring the amount. Mind, you have not to deal with men of low rank, who can be bought over with a word, but with a barbarous people, the Moors, who will stop at nothing to obtain their end." These Brahmins spoke to me in such touching terms, that though I am for years accustomed to their subtle artifices, I really believed we were going to be put to the severest tortures. The captain, however, finding that nothing could be forced from me, ordered us all back to prison.

The captain of the fort—a Rajaput—came to pay me a friendly visit and ordered milk and food to be brought. Not wishing to give up the penance I had

set myself to do, I accepted the milk but refused to take the food. The captain, alarmed at this for fear that I might die, ordered the guards to watch me closely during the night. They placed a lamp near me, lit a fire and beat their drums lest they might fall asleep. This worried and fatigued me more than anything else. It was impossible to get a moment's rest. The reason for the Rajaput's apprehension must be ascribed to the fact that not unfrequently the Indians kill themselves for the least thing, and they were conscious of having heaped enough insults and ignominy upon me to fear that I might be driven to have recourse to such extremes.

Meanwhile, account had to be rendered to Sek-Sahib. Some detached themselves altogether from the authors of this persecution ; others wrote to him that, in case we were to be released, it was necessary to banish us from Thakkōlam. Threats were renewed, and we were constantly told that our tortures were only suspended for a short while.

When I had a chance of speaking to my catechists, I asked them if in reality they had been burned with those fearful irons which they were heating in my presence. I was glad to learn, that, though those instruments of torture were again and again held up to their face, one of the Rajaputs would avert their being applied to their bodies. They were still however suffering acute pain in their hands and feet and were still kept in chains. I was so anxious to obtain

some relief for these poor men, and fortunately the occasion offered itself sooner than I expected.

I was myself so weak that I could hardly walk. The captain of the fort, being informed of this, hastened to see me. He begged of me to take some nourishment and gave me permission to walk about the gardens. I said I am a "Karuna guru," that is, a priest who sympathises with his disciples. What would they think of him if he were to refresh himself in the garden whilst they were left in chains? If, I added, you will release the fetters of these poor men, I shall accept your offer. He promised, but that day passed without a sign of its realisation. The next day he visited me again and brought me "avel," and begged of me to eat. I sternly refused to do so and insisted on my request. I waited till eight o'clock in the evening, but seeing that his promise was not carried out, I returned the "avel" to him. This troubled him so much that at once, that very evening, he came with a blacksmith to remove the chains from my catechists. I then partook of the "avel," but it was with great difficulty I could digest anything substantial after such a long abstinence.

The pagans were very much edified by the austere penance I practised. One of them, who had shown the greatest opposition to Christianity, gave a "fanum" to buy milk for me so that he might share in my merits. He informed me through others that he had quite changed his opinion and began seriously to think of becoming a Christian

himself. People in the town came to the conclusion that, after all, the *sanyasy* was not the *prangi* he had been made out to be. If God was not with him, he would have died after four days of such rigorous penance. Surely, they said, a man who lives the life of a *prangi* cannot in a moment go over to such extremes.

One of the principal inhabitants of the town, a Brahmin, came frequently to visit me in prison. He could not understand how men, who devoted their lives to prayer and the practice of charity, could be subjected to a treatment such as we received. "Surely," he said, "this confirms my belief in the transmigration of souls, and you will never succeed in making me renounce my firm belief in a previous generation or birth in which your soul and that of your catechists have called down upon you and themselves these present humiliations."

One of the catechists here answered and said that a man is never exempt from faults, at least light or venial ones. A distraction in prayer, for instance, might offend the divine Majesty. This was, however, difficult for an idolator to understand, one who has no idea of the infinite attributes of a Supreme Being. I told the Brahmin that passing sufferings were not always intended as punishments. They were permitted by God for our greater good. It gave us an opportunity of practising virtues which otherwise we would not have practised. Innocent souls sometimes suffer great trials. Not that I wished to place myself on a

level with such privileged souls; for I have reason enough to humble myself, but I said this to disabuse the man of his erroneous ideas.

And here I wish to offer some good advice to those whom Providence has destined for this mission, and that is, never to speak of or allude to oneself in the presence of pagans. A missionary, from a sense of humility, having once remarked that he was a great sinner, a pagan who overheard this, reported it to his people and observed that it must be true or else the *sānyasi* would not say so.¹

Father Martin, having heard of my imprisonment, left Madura at once to come to my aid. On his way he called at the palace of Sek-Sahib, which was a somewhat hazardous thing to do under the present circumstances. He saw the governor and offered his own head for my release. Sek-Sahib was at first somewhat troubled and surprised, but after half-an-hour's interview he granted his request.

Father Martin hastened on to Thakkōlam with a letter from Sek-Sahib, which, directly on his arrival, he presented at the Tsāvady. Unfortunately the captain was at that moment about three miles away from the town. Requesting that the letter be forwarded to him without delay, he asked and obtained permission to visit me in prison.

I shall not attempt to describe the intense happiness I experienced when this good angel came

(1) The Hindu, be it observed, has not the slightest idea of true humility as inculcated by Jesus Christ.

falling on my neck. He hardly recognised me, so emaciated did I appear. But the few hours we spent together made me forget all that had passed.

Time went on, the day was far advanced, and we began to fear that perhaps the governor's letter had not been transmitted. However, in the evening we heard the trumpet sound and shortly after the captain appeared at the fortress. He had received orders to set us free and to restore to my disciples whatever had been taken from them. These orders were at once executed. Accompanied by drums and trumpet I was carried in a palanquin, and the same captain, who had taken me prisoner, conducted me with honour to my church.

How much I should have wished to keep Father Martin with me for some time ! But having accomplished his task, he hastened back to his beloved people.

Thus, sir, has the storm, which the pagans had raised against the Christians of Thakkōlam, been dissipated. It has served, thanks be to God, to confound the enemies of our holy religion, confirmed these first Christians in their faith, made the Christian truths shine forth more brilliantly than ever, and has produced a daily increasing number of adorers of Jesus Christ.

I hope soon to give you particulars regarding the building of the Church of Epiphany which you have founded in the Carnatic.

CHAPTER III.

We now stand before a wide chasm of six years. The most interesting period in the annals of the Telugu Mission is left a blank. During this long interval events must have occurred in the newly cultivated field that would be of the highest interest to us now. Unfortunately the *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses* do not contain a single letter from any Father for all these years. It is useless to speculate on the reasons which have guided the editors of that most interesting work to leave out so long and important a period. It cannot be supposed that no news was forthcoming. We may perhaps assume that the letters of that period contained matters of more serious consideration and of little interest to the general public. For, we must remember that this was a most anxious time for the missions in India. The Decree of Cardinal de Tournon on the Malabar rites (8th July 1704) threatened the ruin of the missions, and we can easily understand how this threw the pioneer Fathers of the Carnatic into a state of the greatest perplexity and fear. But, apart from the fact that the Jesuits were in the habit of keeping their friends and benefactors at home well informed regarding their work in the mission, it is passing strange that so prominent and

important a man as Father de la Fontaine, who, as we have seen, began his mission with such wonderful success at Punganur, should have left no record of his doings. It must be observed, moreover, that he became the Superior of the Carnatic Mission in succession to Father Bouchet¹ who succeeded Father Tachard as Provincial at Pondicherry. It is therefore exceedingly disappointing that not a single letter from this zealous and most successful missionary is on record. Incidentally his name is mentioned by the Fathers under his charge in subsequent letters. They speak in the highest terms of his indefatigable zeal and the great assistance he was able to afford them. In fact, for 18 years he was the mainstay of the Telugu Mission. The Viscountess of Harmoncourt was his mother, who most liberally supported his work with her generous alms².

1. Father Bouchet left for Europe in 1705, in order to plead the cause of the missions menaced with destruction in consequence of the Decree of Cardinal de Tournon on the Malabar rites.

2. J'apprends en ce moment la mort du Père de la Fontaine, notre Supérieur General. Quelle perte Pour notre Mission ! Dieu nous l'enlève dans un temps où sa présence sembloit être le plus nécessaire. Sa douceur, son humilité, ses manières affables et obligeantes lui avoit gagné le cœur des Français et des Malabares. Les églises qu'il a fondées dans cette Mission seront les monumens durables du zèle dont il brûloit pour la gloire de Dieu et pour le salut des âmes. Madame la Vicomtesse d'Harmoncourt, sa mère, lui faisoit tenir chaque année une aumône considérable, qui le mettoit en état de fournir aux frais qui sont indispensables lorsqu'on entreprend d'ouvrir une nouvelle Mission. La Mission de Carnate, surtout celle qui est en deçà des montagnes le regarde avec justice comme son fondateur.

Letter of Father Le Gac, dated Krishnapuram, Anantapoor Dt., 10 Dec. 1718, Vol. VII, p. 377.

Father de la Fontaine was looked upon as the founder of the Carnatic Mission. He spent eighteen years in the Telugu Mission and died 10 November, 1718, at Chinna Balapuram, where he lies buried.

Before Father de la Fontaine took up his residence at Punganur. Father Mauduit had already, as related above, made eighty converts in that town. Shortly after, we are told by the Superior that Father de la Fontaine had baptized eight Brahmins and was on that account called the Apostle of the Brahmins. It is evident, therefore, that, notwithstanding the persecution raised against him in the beginning, Father de la Fontaine had several hundreds of neophytes at Punganur. The conversion of so many Brahmins must necessarily have drawn a great many Sudras into the fold. This persecution, moreover, was not of long duration. For, in the same letter referred to above, the Superior relates that Father de la Fontaine was working with even greater success than before.

It is a thousand pities, then, that we have not a word from this glorious missionary's own hand. Punganur is, after all, the cradle of the Telugu Christians. It would, therefore, be to us of the highest interest and importance to have had some particulars as to that ever-memorable town and its first Christian from the very hand that founded and nourished the infant Telugu Church.

Punganur became undoubtedly a most flourishing mission. The Rajahs of that kingdom, important as it was then, were most favourably disposed

towards the priest and his people ; and this traditional good disposition shows itself in the good will of their descendants even to the present day.

It became, as it were, a centre of missionary activity, from which the light of faith radiated into the surrounding country. Though subsequently destroyed and dispersed by the wars, the communities we see established in the adjacent districts were important enough to have a church with a resident priest. Such were, for example, Venkatigiri, south of Punganur, and Perakur, not far from Venkatigiri¹. At the latter place a church in honour of the Epiphany was built. But, sad to relate, soon after its completion, both Father Mauduit and Father de Courbeville were poisoned by the Brahmins², both dying within a quarter of an hour of each other, in the year 1711³, the church entirely destroyed and the Christians expelled. As to the former, namely Venkatigiri⁴, this remained a very important mission station for many years. Father Calmette, as we shall find in the sequel, dates a letter from the town of Venkatagiri, the 24th of January, 1733. It was frequently resorted to as a place of refuge by Christians when driven away by persecution from other towns

1. Perakur is still in existence but now a small hamlet.

2. At Carveypondy, where they died.

3. *Lettres Edit et Cur.*, vol. VII. p. 194. Ils moururent tous deux en moins d'un quart d'heure.

4. This little principedom is not the territory of the same name in what is now the Nellore District.

and villages, and, as this same Father tells us in a previous letter, became, in fact, a large Christian settlement composed mainly of those brave neophytes who, rather than forsake their religion, confessed their faith in Jesus Christ by taking shelter in this little principedom¹. Some of the Rajah's own relations, as we shall see in due course, became Christians.

In view of such a glorious past, it is, no doubt, sorrowful information to impart at the present day that the Venkatigiri Christians are now entirely lost to the faith. The original Christian inhabitants (surely not the numerous refugees) appear to have belonged to the Kuraba caste (blanket weavers). Descendants of them are still living at Arugunda near Venkatigiri, who, by their adherence to Christian names, reveal their descent to the present day.

Punganur continued to be a very important missionary centre up till the year 1733, when, after a few days of gallant defence, it was taken by the Moors. The Rajah's palace was entirely ruined and the town set fire to, the church sharing in the general destruction. The Moors placed on the throne the Rajah's infant son, appointing Somappa, a Brahmin, as administrator². Peace being somewhat restored, the Jesuits were not slow in returning to a town which had been so signally favoured by God. At first the priest took shelter in the house of a Christian, where he could conveniently hold divine service and

1. Letter of Father Calmette, dated Ballapuram 28 Sept. 1730.

2. General de l'état.

execute his priestly functions. He then asked for and obtained an interview with the Administrator, which resulted in a long discussion on the unity of God, and had the effect of favourably inclining Somappa towards the Christian religion. The priest, having obtained from him a piece of ground in the heart of the town¹, started at once building a house. People began again to flock around the *Romapuri Sanyasi* and many new converts were made. Among these newly acquired neophytes was a respectable family, whose faith was severely put to the test by an elderly relative who was a captain in the army. Somappa paid a second visit to the priest, having this time a crowd of Hindus in his suite and twelve Brahmins to discuss philosophical and religious matters. Punganur had resumed its former prestige and the Christian community began once more to grow with renewed vigour².

We may judge from this in what a flourishing condition Punganur must have been just at the time when the records are silent. Regretfully, therefore, we are obliged to leave this long interval of six years to mere inference and conjecture. How long this prosperity lasted, is, however, hard to say. Father de la Lane in a letter dated Pondicherry, 30th January, 1709, seems to refer to a subsequent decline, for he says: "Father de la Fontaine, who worked in the

1. *Dans l'enceinte de la ville.* The first church had been built in the tope.

2. *Lettres Edif. et Cur.*, vol. VII. page 537.

beginning with wonderful success and baptized a great number of pagans, afterwards suffered great trouble and opposition because of the rumour spread by the Brahmins that he belonged to the Prangi-caste. He was, however, known to bear all this with patience and wisdom. He has since advanced further interior towards the West where the faith is beginning to make great progress.¹

All that can be traced as belonging to that important period are two long and learned dissertations by Father Bouchet, the Superior, on the philosophy of the Hindus as compared with the system of Pythagoras and Plato *. He opens his learned treatise with the remark that, after carefully studying the Hindu books, he comes to the conclusion that "there is scarcely any error of the ancients which the Indians have not either borrowed or invented. Many believe that the souls are eternal, others that they are a portion or part of God Himself. They are indeed nearly all convinced of the soul's immortality; but they prove this immortality by the doctrine of metempsychosis and of transmigration of souls in different bodies."

"It is," he adds, "difficult to understand how so chimerical an idea has spread throughout Asia. Not to speak of the Indians below the Ganges,

1. *Lettres Edif. et Cur.*, vol. VI. page 382.

2. *Lettres Edif. et Cur.*, VII. page 101.—Letter without date addressed to Mgr. Huet, late Archbishop of Avranches,

“a great portion of the people of Arracan, of Pegu, Siam, Cambodia, Tonking and Cochin-China, of China and of Japan, hold this ridiculous opinion of metempsychosis and sustain it by the same reasoning as the Indians.”

This dissertation is most conclusive and erudite. But, lying outside the purview of this little history, we can only refer to it in passing, interesting and instructive though it be. It would no doubt, for instance, be highly pleasing to our extreme evolutionists to find their system so resolutely maintained and doggedly defended by that of the Brahmins. Does not the highly developed instinct of the various animals, they say, show their being endowed with a soul like ours! Observe the monkeys. They have their intelligible signs of communication. It is mere cunning and mischief on their part that they refuse to speak to us, because they fear they may be set to work and to toil, to which their light-mindedness and lazy habits decline to accommodate themselves. Or again, anti-vivisectionists would find some consolation in knowing that their sentiments are clearly upheld by the learned Indian Brahmins, who, 200 years ago, seriously told us that a donkey frequently refuses to eat its straw and rather dies of hunger, because it suddenly recollects that, in days gone by, it had been an emperor enjoying most sumptuous meals! ¹

1. *Lettres Edif. et Cur.*, vol. VII, pages 150, 151.

Within the short space of nine years those intrepid missionaries, braving all opposition, had already advanced as far as Chinna Ballapuram, which is about 50 miles N.W. of Punganur. Their great and noble ambition was to work their way up as far North as possible till they should join their brethren in Bengal, who, having the same aim and fired by the same zeal, were extending their labours towards the South, and thus convert the whole of India below the Ganges. That this was their ultimate object is shown in the following letter of Father Le Gac, and is explicitly stated by one of the early pioneers.

Formidable obstacles had, however, to be surmounted. Men less holy and zealous in the service of their Master might well have been discouraged.

Nothing stands out more clearly in the history of the Church than the fact, that wherever the faith is preached, no sooner does the grace of God commence to operate in the souls of men of good will, than Satan stirs up his followers to overthrow the Cross newly planted on the soil and to undermine the work of Christ's servants. In the first ages, because the national pride and greatness of pagan Rome was bound up with and linked to the honour of its gods, the Christian religion had to battle with a national and political opponent as embodied in the great Roman Empire, then in the zenith of its glory. Fierce and long though these persecutions were, they had nothing of a personal element in them. Here in India, however, it is, and has always been the

ambition of a class : the jealousy of the Brahmin and of the pagan *guru*. It is not national greatness or the honour of the gods that is here at stake, but the personal prestige and self-interest of a domineering pagan priesthood¹, which proves, nevertheless, an almost insurmountable barrier to the spread of a religion where self-love is a base and odious vice.

We have seen what happened at Thakkōlam and were given to understand what took place at Punganur. We now meet with the same obstacles at Chinna Ballapuram. There it was the jealous Brahmin who opposed the Priest. Here we have a more general revolt, which, hatched, nursed and guided by the Dasaries, set astir their followers—the Vishnuvites—be they Brahmins or Sudras. Chinna Ballapuram, a considerable town in the Carnatic Mission, is now under the jurisdiction of Bangalore and lies on the outskirts of the Telugu-Kanarese country.

The famous Missionary, Father Le Gac, who did so much for the Telugu people, and of whose wonderful labours we shall hear more later on, will initiate us into the difficulties Christianity had to face at its first introduction in those parts :

LETTER OF

Father Etienne le Gac, missionary of the Company of Jesus, to Father Charles Porcée of the same Company:

1. At the present day these same men now “educated”—the men of Congress and Swadeshi fame—are clamouring against a too indulgent Government, not for the good and prosperity of their country, but for their own advancement and that of their kith and kin.

CHINNA BALLAPURAM,
 Rev. Father, 10th January 1709.¹

The peace of our Lord.

You are aware that, some years ago, we started a mission in the kingdom of the Carnatic on the same plan as that of the Portuguese Jesuits of Madura. Our beginnings were very much like theirs, and the same difficulties they found, if not greater, also beset us. Only recently we braved one of the most violent storms, which this newly-born mission has had to sustain. The Dasaries, who profess to honour especially Vishnu, had since long been concerting plans to arrest the progress of the Gospel. But seeing that their secret plottings had not the desired effect, they resolved to attack us in the open. Relying on the strength of their numbers for gaining over the Rajah to their cause, they made sure of success.

It was New-Year's day. The Christians were just leaving the church, when our compound was suddenly filled with a crowd of people. The Dasaries mustered in great numbers, accompanied by some soldiers from the palace and a crowd of people of all castes who had gathered for mere curiosity's sake. The leaders demanded to see the priest. Father de la Fontaine at once stepped forward, and with his usual gracious affability, began to discourse on the greatness of God and the necessity

1. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, vol. VI, p. 358.

of knowing and serving Him. This satisfied and was applauded by those who had not come from bad motives. But the emissaries of the Vishnuvite *gurus* raised their angry voices and threatened soon effectively to avenge their gods, whom, they said, we rendered despicable by our preaching. Father de la Fontaine calmly replied that we taught the truth to all people, making them understand that only they who follow the truth could hope to attain the heavenly glory to which it is every one's duty to aspire.

This terminated our first with the Dasaries. They were wild with rage and swore they would not rest till we were expelled from the country. In the little town of Chillakatta, about nine miles from here, the pagan *gurus* had formed the same resolution. They were impatient of the desertion of so many of their followers, a great number of whom had already been baptized. Their income began to diminish in proportion to the falling off of vishnu's worshippers. This, more than the zeal for their gods, embittered them against our holy religion.

The following day, the second of January, early in the morning we were informed that the Dasaries were gathering in great numbers in the public streets. Their seditious cries and the noise of drums and trumpets furiously sounding through the air, induced the Rajah to despatch two Brahmins to us to apprise us of the tumult and to request us to leave the town without delay, as he saw no possibility of appeasing a populace whose rage had been roused

against us. Father de la Fontaine made answer that he respected the Rajah's wishes, but that he was too well convinced of his equitable dispositions to doubt for a moment justice would not be done to them. At that very moment the Dasaries, followed by an immense crowd of people, came to pillage our church. The compound and the large public space in front of the church not being sufficient to contain all the people, many climbed on the walls and on the neighbouring houses to witness the coming trouble. The Dasaries, who were armed with weapons of all sorts, cried with all their might that if we did not leave they would lay hands on us. We were on the point of falling victims to the fury of the Dasaries, if the father-in-law of the Rajah, who holds the second place in the principedom and has charge of the police, had not sent some soldiers to restrain the disorderly crowd. The tumult, however, did not subside till nightfall. They retired in a body to the fortress, where, to intimidate the Rajah, they brandished their swords, and swore to kill themselves if we were allowed any longer in the country. The insurrectionary spirit ran so high that, for fear of more serious consequences, guards were posted at the fortress and at the gates of the town.

I admired and adored God's special protection over us. The disorder was general. The father-in-law of the Rajah was himself a Dasary; the Rajah's own attachment to the worship of Vishnu was no

secret ; and still, notwithstanding all this, orders were given for our protection as if we had some special protector at the court.

Not, however, that the plan of driving us from the country was given up. Every now and again the Rajah sent word to advise us to leave the place, at least until such time that this sedition should have subsided, as he was, he repeated, unable to restrain an infuriated people who had sworn our perdition. We thanked the Rajah for his kind advice, but could not think of acceding to his request. We feared that if we yielded, it might be the entire loss of this newly rising Christian station and deprive us of all hope to advance further North. Had we left our church, they would never have allowed us to return, and the consequence would be that they would have expelled us likewise from our church at Devanapalle.¹

These and other considerations made us determine to suffer any ill-treatment rather than to consent to their proposal. Hence to the many messages from the Rajah we had only one reply, namely, that the God we served would know how to protect us against our enemies, if that were conducive to His glory ; but that, should it be His will that we succumbed to our persecutors, we were prepared to shed our blood in His cause. In fact, this was our definite answer, that we were resolved not to leave the church except at the expense of our lives.

1. Devanapalle is only a few miles south of Chinna Ballapuram.

The general tension, however, remained unabated. We were every moment expecting to fall into the hands of the implacable Dasaries, or to be ignominiously expelled from the town. But God visibly watched over us, and raised up intercessors, who, of their own free will, took up our defence. When it was being rumoured in the town that the Dasaries were preparing for a second attack, a great many of the principal merchants, officers of the Rajah, and other notable people came to our church. It was curiosity, more than any other motive, that made them call on us there, but they were so well satisfied with the interview Father de la Fontaine accorded them, that, with many manifestations of their good will, they gave us their word that they would take up our cause.

From that moment so sudden and remarkable a change took hold of the mind of the people, that we can only attribute its cause to Divine providence. They began to sympathise with us and we were no more molested. But what we felt with intense grief, infinitely more than personal insult, was that now they turned their hatred against our Christians. And let me here bear witness to the truth. What sustained our courage during this time of affliction and what filled our hearts with consolation, was the fervour of our neophytes and their desire to share in our sufferings for Jesus Christ. All the Christians without a single exception were ready to suffer and bear witness

to their faith. In the midst of the tumults they never blushed to profess publicly their religion. In the evenings they retired into their houses and there had prayers in common, asking God to give them strength to brave this trial and to withstand the temptations to which they were now exposed.

The pagan *gurus* issued an order forbidding each and every one either to give fire to the Christians or to let them draw water at the wells. This meant for our Christians exclusion from the caste. They could no longer have intercourse with their relatives, nor were their most necessary wants of life to be supplied by potters, washermen, and so forth. In a word, by this sort of excommunication they were disgraced and obliged to leave the town. Nothing could well have pained us more than this intelligence, because of its consequences to the faith.

It so happened that the day after the publication of this order, a Christian woman who had come to the church for the usual evening prayers, fell into a well which was almost entirely dry and about 34 or 35 feet deep. Other Christians who were following ran to the rescue, uttering their favourite exclamation of Jesus and Mary and calling for assistance. What a surprise it was, especially to the heathens, who had come running, to see her quietly being drawn up safe and unhurt by the aid of a rope which had been thrown to her. The pagans confessed that only the God of the Christians could have worked such a miracle.

Nevertheless the *gurus* were sending their disciples into the houses of the Christians with a view to intimidate them. Several have already been turned out by their relatives; but they remained firm in the faith. Help us with your prayers that our divine Lord may give us all courage and strength which we so much require to persevere: for, at this moment, as I write, the dreadful storm has not yet passed away.

I am, with all respect and in union of prayers and sacrifices," etc.

There is another letter of the same year and the same month which throws much light on the times of which we write and fills in some respect the gap of the preceding six years.

Father de la Lane, one of the Carnatic pioneers,¹ who was for three years stationed at Thakkōlam, where he suffered great hardships at the hands of the pagans as well as of the Moors, had, because of ill-health, retired to Pondicherry, whence he dates his letter full of general interest.² It treats of many

1. Father D. Aubert, in a letter to the Father General dated Carveypandy 7 Oct. 1714, writes: Father de la Lane is very weak. A few years ago he had to leave the Mission unable to bear up with the austere mode of life. Seeing, however, how the mission suffered for want of labourers, he returned two years ago, and, notwithstanding his poor health, devotes himself with great zeal to the work. Our Lord blesses his efforts. In these two years he has baptized 100 adults, mostly of the Pariah caste, who are far easier to convert.

2. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, vol. VI, p. 364. The letter is dated 30 Jan. 1709.

subjects, which, though interesting, do not fall directly within the scope of this work. It is therefore with reluctance we shall have to dismiss it with a mere cursory glance.

In describing the limits of the Carnatic,¹ he remarks: "Hence by the Carnatic Mission we must not merely understand the kingdom bearing that name; it comprises moreover many provinces and several kingdoms, which embrace a vast extent of country. It stretches from South to North over more than 900 miles in length and about 120 miles from East to West at its narrowest part where it is bounded by the Mysore territory; for everywhere else the sea is its only limit. It includes, as I understand, the following principal states: Carnatic proper, Visapur, Bijanagaram, Ikkeri and Golconda. There are, besides, a great number of minor states belonging to particular rajahs, most of whom are tributaries to the great Mogul."²

With the exception of Ikkeri and part of Visapur, all this vast extent of country, going by the general name of the Carnatic, is inhabited practically by the Telugu people. It is this immense country which the French Jesuits had set themselves to bring into the fold. If this their noble aim has not

1. See footnote to page 8.

2. The map in Vol. VIII, *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, a copy of which is given, delineates the Carnatic exactly according to this description.

had its entire fulfilment, it is nevertheless remarkable that in God's own good time, the whole of this vast country has been brought within the purview of Christ's redeeming grace. The Archdiocese of Madras and its suffragan dioceses of Vizagapatam and Hyderabad well-nigh cover the whole of this ground. Priests to the number of 100 are now spread at comparatively short intervals over this enormous Missionary field. So that, practically, in the course of two hundred years, God has not left unheeded the aspirations, prayers and generous self-sacrifice of its first pioneers. If the harvest is comparatively small, the good seed, sown in the sweat of their brow by these heroic men, has undoubtedly spread over nearly the whole extent of the "Carnatic". If the countries over which the breath of the Holy Ghost has passed like a "phase Domini", calling it to the Redemption in Christ, have not fully corresponded to the grace extended to it, it is because "it has not known the time of its visitation," and we should perhaps not hesitate to say with St. Paul, "*Ideo sunt inexcusabiles.*"

Father de la Lane considers the country well populated, dotted, as it is, with large towns and villages. It would, however, be more prosperous, he adds, if the Moors who have subjugated it, did not incessantly harass the people with their relentless extortions.

"The oppression," he continues, "which the "pagans experience under this sort of dominion,

“would not present such a great obstacle to the
 “spread of the faith, if the Moors on their part were
 “not the implacable enemies of the Christian religion.
 “The latter are but too eager to give a willing ear
 “to the complaints the pagans are ever ready to
 “bring against us.”

What was to be done? The Mahomedans were masters of the country, and with these additional odds against them, the Jesuits had to plant the faith. It has been remarked before, that, humanly speaking, their undertaking came years too late. Here we have a conclusive testimony to this statement.

In view of the discontent with the British Government, stirred up from time to time by self-interested men, it is perhaps well that the Hindus should be reminded of what their country was like before an all too just nation undertook to protect its interests and guide its destiny. Father de la Lane tells us :—“The Indians are indeed very miserable. “They reap almost no fruit from their labours. “The king or governor of each state has absolute “dominion and holds the lands as his own. His “officers force the inhabitants of a town to cultivate a “certain extent of land marked out for them. At “the time of the harvest these same officers get the “crops cut, and, putting up the grain in stacks, affix “the king’s seal and withdraw. When it suits their “convenience, they return, and, confiscating the “grain, they leave a fourth part, and sometimes less, “to the poor farmer. They then sell it to the people

“at their own price, without any one daring to raise
 “a voice against it. * * * *

“The governors deal out justice without much
 “formality. He who offers the most money, is almost
 “always sure to win his case. Thus the blackest crimes
 “go frequently without chastisement. It often happens
 “that both parties vie with each other in offering the
 “larger amount. The Moors take from both sides,
 “without, as a rule, satisfying either party. Notwith-
 “standing all this abject servility, the Indians are left
 “free in their caste customs—a liberty they are not
 “slow to make use of with regard to those who have
 “become Christians, whom they expel from their caste
 “if they refuse to renounce Christianity.”

Among some of the good qualities of the Hindus, Father de la Lane singles out their quiet temperament, and says that nothing scandalises them more than precipitation and an outbreak of passion. It is certain, he adds, that, with such good dispositions, many would become Christians, if the fear of losing their caste did not withhold them. “This is one of those obstacles,” he rightly remarks, “for which there is no remedy. God alone can remove it by some extraordinary means of which we are totally ignorant.”

We fully endorse this statement. Nevertheless we believe that caste, in itself, would be no obstacle to us Catholics, if it were not for the Brahmins, who in their own interests, make the people believe that

by becoming a Christian one forfeits caste. Unfortunately this erroneous idea has been greatly strengthened by the policy of the Protestants, who, taking up this ruse of the Brahmins, considered caste and creed necessary concomitants; so that, at the present day, wherever Protestant converts are to be found, (who belong almost exclusively to the panchama class), our work among the pagan Sudras has become well-nigh fruitless.

However, we see how the cunning Brahmin from the beginning has known to wield this useful weapon. After the first converts among the Telugu people had been made and even some of the Brahmins had embraced Christianity, the Prangi scare was set afoot and became already then a severe test for those who entered the true fold, for caste means to the Hindu more than social standing. In fact, once an outcaste, one is cut off from all—even one's nearest and dearest—relations, and living among one's own becomes utterly impossible.

Father de la Lane, when at Thakkōlam, received into his house a Brahmin boy, a poor, destitute orphan who had begged of him to take him in. He began to instruct this boy and had great hopes of making a good catechist of him. But the Brahmins soon knew how to frustrate his plans. They invented all sorts of stories, with the result that one day Father de la Lane was summoned before the Mahomedan Magistrate. The latter exchanged a few words in Hindustani with

the Brahmin accusers ; and without being allowed a single word in self-defence, he was sentenced to receive a number of stripes or lashes with that fearful instrument the *chabook*. The Father was in very delicate health. Fortunately, a more kindly disposed pagan took pity on him and remonstrated with the judge pleading that the poor man could never survive the ordeal. The Moor's heart softened. He tried by underhand means to extort some money from the priest, but not succeeding, he set him free. The poor boy was, however, taken from him. The Brahmins made the boy go through an elaborate ceremony to purify him from his contact with a Prangi. They cut his Brahminical cord, made him fast for three days, rubbed him over several times with cow-dung, and, having bathed him a hundred and nine times, gave him a new cord and restored him to caste by finally making him partake of a ceremonious public meal.

“The malice of the Brahmins and their aversion for us,” says Father de la Lane, “does not end here. They stop at [nothing to make us odious in the country. If no rain falls, we are the cause. If a misfortune or a public calamity befalls the people, it is our doctrine that has angered the gods and brought these misfortunes. Their sway over the people is enormous, and the abuse with which they impose upon their credulity, borders on the fabulous. * * *

“The obstacles we meet,” he continues, “on the part of the Brahmins to the preaching of the Gospel,

would not distress us so much, if there were some hope of converting them. But this, in the ordinary course of Providence, is morally impossible. There is not a nation or people so proud, so averse to the truth, so obstinate in their superstition, and so headstrong in the pride of their caste. To make matters worse, they are spread all over the land, and are especially to be found at the courts of the Rajahs, where they occupy the highest posts and where everything must pass through their hands."

Towards the end of his letter Father de la Lane says: "Notwithstanding all their (the Brahmins') efforts, Christianity is making every day new progress. There are at present four missionaries working for the conversion of these people. I made the fifth, but had to return to Pondicherry entirely exhausted by the extraordinarily severe manner of life the priest in the interior has to follow."

He enumerates the four missionaries: viz., Fathers Mauduit, De la Fontaine, Le Gac, and Father Petit. We have already made acquaintance with the first two. Of Father Le Gac, he says: "Father Le Gac, after working a short time in the Madura Mission, came to join Father de la Fontaine. He had scarcely entered the Carnatic mission when the Moors put him in prison for a month and made him suffer a great deal. Even now he is constantly worried by the Moors, but his strong-minded disposition and undaunted zeal for souls makes him surmount all difficulties."

“Father Petit,” he says, “is in a mission where he is less exposed to the fury of the Moors, although he also gets his share of trouble from them. In the whole Carnatic his church¹ numbers the most Christians, nearly all baptized by himself.”²

Having given some particulars of Chinna Ballapuram, we must now refer, as briefly as the matter will allow, to Devanapalle, or Devandapalle as the *Letters Edif. et Curieuses* spell it. It lies 12 miles south of Chinna Ballapuram and falls at present, like the latter, under the jurisdiction of the Mysore Diocese. From a letter³ of Father Le Gac, written apparently from Devanapalle, probably at the end of the year 1714 or the beginning of 1715, as may be gathered from the context, we find that converts were made there as early as the year 1704,⁴ *i.e.*, in the very beginning of the opening of the Carnatic Mission. A church was built in 1707.⁵

The Christians of Devanapalle were, as we shall observe, most remarkable for their strong faith and steadfast perseverance under the greatest trials. Scarcely had they embraced Christianity when, in 1710 a fierce persecution broke out, which lasted over two months. The Dasaries did their utmost to make them

1. It is regrettable that the name of this important mission is not given.

2. Father Petit left for France towards 1710.

3. *Lett. Edif. et Cur.*, vol. VII, p. 188, without date.

4. *Idem*, pp. 202 & 222.

5. *Idem*, p. 223.

renounce their religion, but, thanks be to God, they remained firm. "Truth triumphed and calm once more followed the tempest," says Father Le Gac, who had obtained from the prime-minister of that petty state, a rescript, signed by that officer in his own hand permitting the Christians to practise their religion in peace. But this relief was not very lasting and suspended the fury of the Dasaries only for a time. Two years later, in August 1712, they redoubled their efforts and determined to sweep away the Christian religion entirely from that town.

In May of that year, Father Le Gac had gone to Krishnapuram¹ to baptize some catechumens. Many conversions were being made in this newly established mission, when, in August, he received the sorrowful news of the renewed activity of the Dasaries at Devanapalle. His solicitude for those good people would have induced him to return immediately, but it being the eve of the Assumption, he feared that so sudden a departure might alarm the new Christians at Krishnapuram and raise unnecessary apprehensions in the mind of the many catechumens under instruction. He contented himself for the present by writing an open letter to the Christians at Devanapalle, exhorting them to be true to the grace of God, and to esteem it a favour to be worthy of suffering for His holy name. He reminded them of what he had told them so often,

1. Anantapeor Dt., Hindupur Taluq, where his grave and that of two of his confrères are to be seen to this day.

that by becoming Christians they must not expect the good things of this world, but crosses and tribulations as the harbingers of eternal happiness, promising them at the same time that he would soon be with them to console and assist them in their trials. He celebrated the feast of the Assumption at Krishnapuram with great solemnity baptizing that day twenty catechumens, and then hastened back to Devanapalle. On his way he received information that Father Platel, an Italian Jesuit, Superior of the Mysore Mission, which is contiguous with the Carnatic, had arrived at Kotta-Kôta, a town in the hands of the Moors, about nine miles west of Devanapalle. From him he learnt the mischief the Dasaries had been up to in the Mysore Mission and the persecution they were now actually carrying on at Devanapalle. Emboldened by the absence of the priest, they had taken possession of the church driving the old blind catechist in wild fury before them through the streets out of the town. They had it publicly announced that whoever belonged to this new religion was thereby degraded from his caste. No well or public tank was to be approached by them. Even the potters were prohibited from selling them the necessary cooking vessels, and the indispensable dhoby¹ from washing their clothes. In these straits the Christians—men, women and children—betook themselves in a body to the palace for redress but were given no hearing. A converted Brahmin

1. Washerman.

family, who were living at the church, were ignominiously expelled and a Dasary family installed in their place. The altar was overthrown and the church desecrated. They had even the impudence to give out that in demolishing the altar they had found bones and a certain magic powder with which the priests bewitch, they said, those whom they wished to convert. Father Le Gac was burning with impatience to go to the relief of his poor christians. But how was he to enter the town? Every avenue was closed and guards were posted with strict orders to prevent the priest entering the place. He, however, succeeded, entirely disguised, to put the watchmen off their guard, and slipped in at the dead of night. He hid himself in the house of a Christian till day-break, and then, assuming his ordinary costume, mounted an elevated spot near the palace. In a moment the news spread through the town. Crowds gathered round him. The Dasaries, thus foiled in their scheme, behaved with the greatest insolence. To gain the confidence of the people and stem the tumult raised by the Dasaries, Father Le Gac offered to treat the question from the religious point of view and to discuss with any one they choose the points they might take exception to. As usual, not one ventured to accept the challenge. The Father would not be moved from his place of vantage, fully convinced that, notwithstanding the plottings of the Dasaries, he would get the better part of the people on his side. He remained there for

two days and two nights exposed to the heat of the sun and to the rains that were then falling. His sorrows were increased by the sad news, which was just then brought to him, of the death by poison of Fathers Mauduit and de Courheville at Perakur.¹ The people's mind, however, began to turn in his favour. Had he been able to hold out a little longer in his place on the little hill incessantly speaking to the crowd, all would have been well. But the unfortunate circumstance, that next day it was the feast of their principal deity, Vishnu, shattered his hopes. The idol was to be carried round the streets. Father Le Gac was asked to make his reverence when the god should pass. The prime minister, who was kindly disposed towards the Christians, warned the Priest that, unless he complied, the Dasaries in their wild fury might kill him in the tumult of the procession. Much to his regret he had to leave and hide himself close by in the garden of a Christian soldier. The Dasaries considered this a victory, and it encouraged them in their evil designs. The young prince turned a deaf ear to all petitions, whether from the priest or from the Christians. He might possibly have listened to better counsels but for the fanaticism of a bigoted Brahmin in charge of the principal temple, who, taking the part of the Dasaries, swore that this newly imported religion must be extirpated. The haughty insolence of the Dasaries now knew no bounds. They boldly

1. These Fathers appear to have been poisoned at Carveyyondy.

entered the houses of the Christians, smashed and overturned everything, loaded them with insults and injuries, and ordered them, under cover of the Rajah's name, either to abjure the faith or to leave the town. Forced and boycotted as they were, some families left their homes and took shelter in a cave at a short distance from the town. Here they lived for nearly two months. It was the rainy season. The cave could hardly contain such a large number. They were huddled together in the slush and the mud. Having to cook their meals inside owing to the rains, the smoke added to the discomforts of the place. "When I visited them and saw them in this condition," says Father Le Gac, "I could hardly contain my tears, but their faith sustained them in these sore trials and they were happy to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ."

Those who had managed to stay in the town were daily exposed to new insults. The Dasaries dragged them forth from their houses abusing and ill-treating them in the public street. Two young Christian soldiers had been locked up in the fortress with a view to make them renounce their religion, but in vain. The Dasaries vented their rage on the stepmother¹ of these young neophytes. Not daring to lay their hands on a woman, they engaged some prostitutes to enter the house. These dragged her by the hair into the street and, throwing her down,

1. Bellemère may mean mother-in-law, but from the nature of the case it is more likely that stepmother is meant.

beat her most cruelly. "Her face all bruised, she came to me," says Father Le Gac, "but far from seeking consolation, she felt a pride in having thus given testimony of her unwavering faith."

Examples of the greatest fervour and devotion were not wanting. One of these deserves special mention. An otherwise unassuming and somewhat timid Christian, with a courage worthy of praise, not heeding the threats and insults of the Dasaries, went about visiting the Christians, even those locked up in the fortress, to console and encourage them; and when a crowd gathered round him, he would bravely speak of the Christian religion, contrasting the peace and forbearance of the Christians and their *guru* with the fury and insolence of the followers of Vishnu and their leaders. Many of the heathens, admiring his courage, took his part and thereby saved him from being molested by the Rajah's soldiers.

But nothing can be more edifying than the conduct of two little children, a boy of ten and a girl of eight years. It was at the very commencement of the persecution, when, playing somewhere near the church, they were asked by the Rajah's officers in jest if they were ready to die for their God. The children at once knelt down and folding their hands, answered firmly: "Yes, we are, this very moment." This utterly confounded the officers, who, placing their hands in astonishment on their mouths, left in confusion.

Father Le Gac gives several instances of the unwavering fidelity of these Christians. The Dasaries were wild with anger that, notwithstanding all their severe measures and inhuman treatment, they had so far not succeeded in making one neophyte renounce the Christian religion. They had, therefore, recourse to some other artifice. They began to offer them money to seduce them. But all to no purpose. The Holy Ghost signally watched over these good souls.

Meanwhile Father Le Gac had made several attempts to gain over the young Rajah to his cause, but had to be satisfied with idle promises, whilst the Dasaries continued plotting under cover of his name. Father Platel had been unsuccessful in endeavouring to secure relief through the influence of two friendly chiefs in the Mysore Army, which was then, as stated above, at Kotta-Kôta, not far distant from Devanapalle. Father de la Fontaine, Superior of the Carnatic mission, though only just recovered from a severe illness, had replaced the Fathers Mauduit and de Courbeville, poisoned at Perakur. As soon, however, as he heard of the persecution at Devanapalle, he hastened to address himself to the Nabob of Arcot through the good offices of Mr. de Sainte Hilaire, the medical officer to the Nabob's nephew at Vellore. Father de la Fontaine succeeded in obtaining a letter to the Rajah. Animated with the hope of bringing relief to the distracted flock, he proceeded in all haste to Devanapalle. Only two days before his arrival, Father Le Gac had left his hiding

place in the town to save the Christian soldier, in whose garden he had been taking shelter, from further molestation. He had joined the Christians, who, putting up outside the town, were awaiting better times. Several of them had occupied other caves farther on, and here he met Father Platel bringing him the sad news of his unsuccessful mission to the Mysore camp. Shortly after, Father de la Fontaine arrived. "So that," he remarks, "we three missionaries met with our catechists in this awkward place. A cause of joy at any other time, now turned into sorrow." "Besides the inconvenience of the place," adds Father Le Gac, "we were in continual dread of the soldiers of the Mysore army, who committed their depredations at night and had already murdered many people in the neighbourhood."

The Nabob's letter was sent to the Rajah. But this misguided youth, whose father had given the Christians perfect liberty to practise their religion and who some ten years before had allowed the Priest to build a church, was entirely led by his father-in-law, a fierce opponent to the Christian faith, so that no notice whatever was taken of the Nabob's rescript. A messenger was despatched to Mr. de Saint Hilaire, who obtained a second letter from the Nabob, which, to carry greater weight, was forwarded by an employee of the Nabob's own court. The Rajah's father-in-law again succeeded in dissuading the young prince from complying with the Nabob's request,

and indeed severer measures were taken against the Christians. Thereupon the three priests took counsel and came to the conclusion that, however reluctant they might be to break up so promising a station, it had become imperative for the Christians to leave the place and settle down in some other part. Sad though this exodus necessarily was, it was nevertheless consoling to witness the spirit which animated these good people. One and all approached the sacraments before their final departure. The heroic fortitude with which they submitted to the holy will of God, was, says Father Le Gac, a touching and consoling spectacle.

One wonders what would happen under similar circumstances to-day. It is true God gives abundant grace in time of need. But this beautiful example of Christian fortitude should at least serve as a lesson to our Telugu Christians, who, for a mere trifle, a small temporal loss, a misunderstanding or disagreement among their fellow-Christians, so easily neglect their duties towards God. Let them remember at what cost their forefathers bought for them the priceless gift of faith.

These generous souls, all of them still neophytes in the faith, having lost everything they possessed, now had to leave—some of them burthened with large families—home and kindred for no other reason but to save their souls. Not one murmured, not one forsook his religion, says Father Le Gac. An old woman,

very ill and unable to follow, asked her heathen relatives to take her in, but they cruelly refused for fear of the Dasaries. A poor Christian family living in a dingy hut outside the town undertook the care of the poor old soul. Another Christian woman was severely put to the test. Her husband was still a heathen. At the moment of leaving with her children, her husband made a last effort to get her to apostatise. "This woman," says Father Le Gac "threw herself at her husband's feet in the presence of several of the Christians, begging pardon for whatever displeasure she might have caused him, but wished him not to ascribe her separation from him to any other cause but the fear of losing her soul and that of her children if she remained in the town. She besought him to consider his own salvation and to break the bonds which still held him to his foolish superstitions. The poor man, with tears in his eyes, made a last attempt and with affectionate and endearing words tried to gain her over. But the valiant woman could not be shaken in her faith."

An example of this kind is worthy to be preserved in the annals of these people from generation to generation. Will the world understand it? And Jesus turning to the multitude who followed him said: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (St. Luke xiv, 26). This brave woman perfectly understood what our Blessed Lord meant by

this ultimate test : "What exchange shall a man give for his soul?" (St. Matthew xvi, 26).

The Fathers were sorely perplexed over the untoward turn matters had taken. The loss of Devanapalle might have most fatal consequences elsewhere, "be it," as Father Le Gac remarks, "for the many missions already established in other towns¹ or for the new ones we have hopes of opening in different parts." A last and supreme effort to re-install the Christians in Devanapalle was therefore deemed absolutely necessary. All their hopes were centred in the powerful intercession of that excellent man Doctor de Sainte Hilaire. It was then, as said before, the rainy season. Heavy rains were falling. The rivers were in full flood. This, however, did not deter their zealous Superior, Father de la Fontaine, who, though still weak in health, at once started for Vellore crossing the rivers, partly by swimming, partly on improvised rafts², and returned within a short time with letters from Mr. de Sainte Hilaire for the Nabob who was advancing against the Mysore army and had just then encamped in the neighbourhood of Devanapalle.

The Nabob received the Priest with every mark of distinction and friendship. He gave him a tent next to his and had him served from his own table. After two days he sent for the Priest, and

1. This shows that there were other missionary stations where then already converts had been made, the names of which unfortunately are not given in the *Lettres Edif. et Cur.*

2. *Lett. Edif. et Cur.*, Vol. VII, p.

telling him he could now safely return to his church, ordered his men to conduct him there on one of his own elephants. Thus, accompanied by music and tom-toms, Father de la Fontaine re-entered triumphantly the town from which the Priests and the Christians had been so ignominiously expelled. This victory was, however, not wholly unalloyed. Father de la Fontaine suffered from acute fever contracted on his journey in this inclement weather. And the Dasaries, foiled in their attempt to stamp out the Christian religion in this town at least, sought new means to obtain their end. A Vishnuvite Brahmin, who held an important post in the Nabob's army lent himself an easy tool to their designs. He peremptorily sent for Father de la Fontaine who could scarcely walk, and told him that, if he dared any longer preach this new religion, he should have his nose and ears cut off. The Dasaries, highly elated over this insult offered to the head of the Christians, openly spoke of adopting new measures no sooner the Nabob should have left the neighbourhood. New and repeated representations were made to the Nabob through Mr. de Sainte Hilaire, who left no means untried to obtain redress for the poor Christians. The Nabob was asked to give an order to the Rajah to see that the Christians were reinstated in their houses which had been occupied by his (the Rajah's) soldiers. Somewhat influenced by evil counsellors and being more-over engaged with matters of his campaign, the Nabob took little notice of this request, leaving thereby a free

hand to the Rajah. All that could be obtained from the latter was that, if the Christians wished to return, they should build new houses for themselves near the church. In any case, thanks to the Nabob, they were now no longer molested and the feast of Christmas was celebrated in the usual manner. The Christians from the neighbouring villages attended the feast, some of them coming from places as far as thirty-five miles. They were those who had been banished from Devanapalle. "It was," says Father Le Gac, "a consolation for us to hear from these poor people how well they had been received by the Christians of Mysore, who, accommodating them in their homes, had supported them all this while and had now provided them with everything necessary for their return."¹

In October 1713, the Christians of Devanapalle had to sustain a third persecution. The Dasaries had actually resolved to take the lives of the Priests as the only means, they thought, of extirpating the Christian religion. They tried their utmost to raise a revolt against the Christians through the length and breadth of the land. To make the fire spread more rapidly, pilgrims, then on their way to Tirupati², were gained over to their cause and made to listen to all sorts of odious imputations against the Priests and their adherents. Fortunately the Rajah of Devanapalle, for

1. *Lett. Edif. et Cur.*, vol. VII, p.

2. "People" says Father Le Gac, "flock there from all parts, some from a distance of 200 miles. I do not believe that in the whole of Europe there is a place so much frequented."

fear of the Nabob by whose order the Christians had returned, held aloof, at least apparently, from the intrigues of the Dasaries. Nevertheless, fearing a general outbreak, Father de la Fontaine thought it advisable to seek in time once more the aid of Mr. de Sainte Hilaire, in order, if possible, to obtain from the Nabob some public sign or manifestation for the free exercise of the Christian religion. That the spirit of these mad Dasaries had run high was sufficiently clear from the fact that Father Emmanuel Dacunha, a Portuguese Missionary in the Mysore Mission, had just then died of the blows received from this ill-guided sect within fifty miles distance from Devanapalle.

A protection of the kind now sought for was, however, not so easily obtained. But, thanks to the untiring zeal of Mr. de Sainte Hilaire, the Nabob sanctioned two banners for the churches of Devanapalle and Chinna Balapuram respectively, with a written patent¹ setting forth that the Roman Sanyasies were granted leave to preach and teach their creed without let or hindrance. Two mounted cavaliers were deputed to accompany Father de la Fontaine for their due delivery to the prince. The Rajah, needless to say, received the banners with honour and respect. He said he would permit his bandsmen to accompany them to the church, but for fear of irritating the pagans he could not have the banners erected according to the usual custom of the country. After

1. The text of which will be found in another chapter.

long deliberations, the Priests were informed they might themselves place them where and how they chose fit.

This exasperated the Dasaries. The chief among them refused to have any sacrifices or ceremonies performed in the temple until the Rajah acceded to their demands. He threatened to assemble ten thousand of his sect to destroy the church and drive the Priests out of the country. The more they tried to appease him, the more infuriated he became ; with the result that the Rajah gave way, and ordered two of the principal families, who had only lately forsaken the Vishnuvite sect, to be expelled from the town. No time or respite was given them. They were forthwith turned out of their houses. For a couple of days they took shelter in the church and then left the town. Encouraged by the Rajah's timidity, six more of the most influential families, "*qui etaient le soutien de cette chrétientè naissante,*" says Father Le Gac, were mercilessly driven from their homes.

The persecution raged with renewed force. The Christians dared not show themselves in public. A young neophyte, Lucy (Prakashiamma) by name, who was making a living by selling provisions in the market-place, was shamefully beaten. Young though she was in faith and in age, she did not swerve in the least. Not being allowed to sell in her own town, she endeavoured to dispose of her provisions in the neighbouring villages. One day, on her return, she was waylaid by the Dasaries, who treated

her so inhumanly that she would have died, had not some pagans, who were working in the fields, delivered her from their hands. Another woman of high caste, who was still a catechumen, was treated in the same manner. The Dasaries, seeing her daily attending Mass and prayers, took her to be a Christian. Far from retracing her steps, the ill-treatment received made her the more fervent.

God signally blessed the unswerving constancy of these good people, "for," remarks Father Le Gac, "the number of converts increased in proportion to the trials and vexations they were exposed to, and that too, mostly among the better class," the very mainstay and support of the Dasaries or Vishnuvite sect.

Fearing that this persecution might, in the end, prove more fatal than all they had suffered before, Father de la Fontaine one evening walked boldly up to the palace and, taking his stand in front of the Rajah's apartments, openly and in a loud voice laid the blame of all this suffering on the Rajah's head. "If," said he, "you do not at once give us relief, I shall tear up the banners of the Nabob under your very eyes, for which you may take the consequences." The Rajah's principal officers were soon on the scene. The Priest's bold step disconcerted them greatly. With soft words and promises they hoped to pacify him and bade him return to the church. But Father de la Fontaine, observing the advantage his boldness

had gained over them, showed forth his indignant feelings with increasing emphasis and absolutely refused to move unless his demand was there and then acceded to. After long deliberations an officer was sent with him to open the gates of the town, and that very night the Christians, who had taken shelter outside, returned to their homes.

The Dasaries, however, were not to be outdone. They gathered in great numbers from other places, marching through the streets, raising alarm and tumult and insisted with the Rajah more than ever that the Priests should be expelled. What added fuel to their rage was the bold but untimely conduct of a newly baptized young man in the Rajah's service. This fiery youth publicly announced that henceforth he would flatly refuse to carry "the corpse of their pretended divinities." This insult offered to their idols was made a pretext of an aggravated complaint to the Rajah. Did he not see, they asked, that the religion of the Prangies was daily increasing, owing to his half-heartedness in the cause. Only a few days back they had lost a family of the Lingaite sect. Unless the most stringent measures were forthwith taken, the whole town would join this detestable creed.

With or without the order or with the connivance of the Rajah, the Christians were once more expelled and, as all their goods were confiscated, the burden of supporting them, says Father Le Gac, fell on the

Priests. Both he and Father de la Fontaine made several attempts to interview the Rajah, but the gates were closed against them. The Dasaries, warned of the Fathers' intention, had followed them in great crowds, so that they were forced to seek shelter under the mandapam of a temple, where they were hooted and insulted and pelted with stones. Some Brahmins came up to dispute with them and the discussion ran on the Adwaitam and Dwaitam doctrine. The difference between these two systems consists in this—that the former admits one Supreme Being, the soul of man not being distinguished from this Being ; whereas, Dwaitams agree that the soul is a created being, distinct from the Supreme Being. “ We stayed,” says Father Le Gac, “ three days in this mandapam. The fourth day, three of the principal Brahmins came and assured us that soon an audience would be given us and with this promise conducted us to our church.” But, whatever attempts they made, the Priests were unsuccessful in their endeavours to see the Rajah, and the poor Christians were compelled to settle down where best they could. The Dasaries actually followed them up and did their utmost to drive them from the different villages, whither they had gone for shelter, but fortunately did not succeed in their attempt.

As a proof of the hatred and fury of those fanatics, adds Fr. Le Gac, the ill-treatment of a woman named Clara, may serve as an example. Secretly, one evening, she had returned to Devanapalle to fetch

some grain which she had deposited in the house of a neighbour. Her daughter, who stayed at the door, thoughtlessly called to her mother by her Christian name. A passing Dasary heard this and forthwith informed the guard. It was 9 o'clock at night. But late as it was, she was taken to the captain of the guard, who, using most abusive language, had her hands tied behind her back and fastened her thus to a post in the open air, in which position she was kept till daybreak. The Dasaries then wreaked their vengeance on her and administered to her in public a most unmerciful flogging. She was then asked to renounce the new religion. But seeing that all efforts to make her apostatize were fruitless, they covered her from head to foot with mud, "which," remarks Father Le Gac, "in this country is as humiliating a treatment as one could possibly receive," and pelting her with stones drove her out of the town. Evening had fallen. Not knowing where to turn in the dark of the night she managed to re-enter the town and concealed herself in the church, where she was found two days after, exhausted and dying from hunger¹.

This deplorable success of the Dasaries at Devanapalle filled the Priest with the greatest anxiety for their community at Chinna Ballapuram. Ballapuram was a much larger and more important town. It was

1. This persecution lasted for over two years all through the years 1713 & 1714. *Letter Edif. et cur.*, Vol. VII, p. 222.

The church of Devanapalle was recovered and re-established by Fr. de la Fontaine with the greatest difficulty. *Idem* VII, p. 278.

now nearly seven years since Father de la Fontaine had built a church there. The Ballapuram Christians had had their share in the persecution when they were still young in the faith about the year 1709, as we have seen in a preceding chapter. Ever since then, the faith had taken deeper and deeper root and a great number of families had been baptized. The Dassaries were quite confident that they would succeed here as they had at Devanapalle. But God averted their wicked plans. It is remarkable to relate that when the persecution at Devanapalle was at its height God showered abundant blessings on Ballapuram. Many of the best families of the Sudra Caste, the same to which the Rajah belonged, embraced Christianity. "These conversions," adds Father Le Gac, "are the more remarkable because of this caste's inveterate attachment to their false gods."¹

A peculiar and extraordinary custom prevailed in this caste, nowhere else to be found. When the first child of the family marries, the mother is obliged to chop off with a carpenter's chisel the two first joints of the two last fingers of her hand,² and this custom, says Father Le Gac, is so indispensable that, if not complied with, she (the mother) would be degraded and deprived of caste. The wives of the Rajahs are,

1. One could wish the name of the caste had been given. It is disappointing that, with the exception of the *Tumma Reddies*, the name of the caste is nowhere mentioned.

2. Et aussitôt on y applique le feu pour étancher le sang (adds Father le Caron), VII, p. 389.

however, privileged. They are dispensed from this cruel self-mutilation provided they make an offering of two golden fingers.¹

It may be of general interest to note that towards the end of the persecution of Devanapalle the Mysore army laid siege to the town of Chinna Ballapuram. On its approach Father de la Fontaine found himself in the dire necessity of demolishing the church. Although Chinna Ballapuram was surrounded by only one moat, this huge army, which consisted of 100,000 men, was for nine months vainly endeavouring to take the place. Their defences consisted of mud walls and wooden fences as a protection against cannon. "Only iron cannons are made use of," says Father Le Gac, "and the bullets or balls, which are of stone, are of enormous size. I have seen some which measured a yard in circumference and I am told that even larger ones are used." After nine months they had not pushed their trenches further than within range of pistol-shot.² They had laid a mine but this was discovered in time.

No sooner had the siege been raised, than a contagious disease broke out in the town, carrying off within a short time a great number of people. Several Christians fell victims to this scourge. A temporary hut had been erected to serve as a church. Father de la Fontaine and three catechists were attacked, two of whom died. The Father was saved

1. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, VII, p. 223.

2. A la portée du pistolet de la contrescarpe : *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, VII, p. 208.

by Mr. de Ste. Hilaire, who, hearing of his illness, sent medicines and a palanquin from Vellore with twelve bearers to take the Father to the coast, where he recovered.¹

It is now time to follow the pioneers of the Carnatic Mission in their advance further north, into that part of the Telugu country whence sprang originally most of the numerous Christians, who are now scattered over the Nellore and Guntur Districts, some of whom have latterly spread even into the Nizam's dominions across the Kistna river. Others are living in the south in the Tamil country.

There were also, no doubt, in those early days conversions made in villages and towns to the east of the sphere of operation, in which we have so far seen the Jesuits at work. It is to be regretted, however, that up to this period no other centres are mentioned by name, though in a general way they are referred to as we have had occasion to observe.

It is clear only a selected number of letters have been published in the *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*, which is the only source of information for those early days; and that, too, obviously with a view to interest people at home, rather than to preserve a complete record of those times now so interesting to us.

There cannot be the least doubt that the Jesuit Missionaries penetrated into what is now called the Cuddapah District. For not only do we find them,

1. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, VII, p. 209.

in passing, mention the conversion of pagans at Vavelupadu (Vyalavadu) and referring to the church of Cambaladiinni, both of which places are situated in that district, but the famous and zealous missionary Bishop Bonand speaks in his diary, as we shall note in its proper place, of Sidavatam (Sidhout) as having been a flourishing Christian settlement in the time of the Jesuits with a resident priest of great renown and influence.

To continue, then, our narrative after this brief digression, we find that Father Le Gac, who had for a short time taken Father de la Fontaine's place at Chinnabalapuram during the latter's illness, now returned to Krishnapuram, where, as we have seen, he had already gathered several souls into the fold.

Krishnapuram, now a village of little or no importance in the Anantapur District, lies about 15 miles south-east of Dharmavaram in the Hindupur Taluq.¹

Three of the pioneer Jesuit Fathers lie buried in this village, which was once a centre of the greatest missionary activity. When, in 1835, Bishop Bonand visited this hallowed spot, the graves which had fallen in ruins had just then been rebuilt by a Christian Kamasala Battudu, who was living there at the time. The last of his descendants left the village in the beginning of 1909; her name is Chinnamma, an old woman of 80 years of age. In its proper place we shall

1. The *Anantapur Gazetteer* wrongly states it to be a village in Mysore, as will appear on reference to the map made by the Jesuits of those days.

have occasion to return to this visit of that great and renowned missionary, and share in his feelings of regret that so important a locality in the annals of the Telugu Christians, sanctified by the sweat and labour of so many holy priests, was then, and has been ever since, neglected and forgotten.

Krishnapuram lies in a very wild and rugged country, never, I presume, frequented in bygone days by any Europeans except the Catholic priest. The Pakala-Dharmavaram branch of the South Indian Railway now passes in a curve to the west and north of it. Muktapuram, the second station from Dharmavaram, is five miles north of Krishnapuram.

In the surrounding villages, which two hundred years ago numbered many converts, one ought still to be able to trace remnants of the stock from which our Telugu Christians sprang. The latter's emigration to far off "*simas*" and the difficulty of intercommunication has alienated the parent families, and new alliances have made them strangers to these parts. It is a pleasure to learn that Father M. Xavier, a native of Firangipuram in the Guntur District, now stationed at Pakala, has discovered ancestral relatives of his in these parts, which would go to prove the origin of the conversion of this caste (Togata) in this neighbourhood. At a village not far from Guntakal which likely belonged in former times to the same *sima* as Ballaram, live relations of the Bandanadham people of Firangipuram. It is also beyond doubt that the first converts of the Sale caste were made at

Krishnapuram and in its immediate neighbourhood. Bishop Bonand, who, as stated above, visited the village in the year 1835, says in his diary that the church was situated in the Salepettah, its ruined walls being then still about a man's height.¹

But about this more in due course. Let us now retrace our steps and speak of the labours of the first missionaries in these wild parts. That travelling was all but safe in those far off days we shall have perhaps more than one occasion to observe. It may be interesting to relate a misadventure Father Le Gac encountered on one of his first trips from Chinna Ballapuram to Krishnapuram. As said before, all that country is wild and mountainous and was in those times almost impassable. We give the adventure in the Father's own words: "I left Chinna Ballapuram to visit our new church at Krishnapuram, which lies three days' journey towards the north. We were attacked on our way by six Mahratta cavalry men, who were lying in ambush in a low hollow place. Suddenly they rode up to us with their lances erect and sword in hand. They took hold of my catechists first and robbed them of all they had. One of them then gave me a thrust in the stomach with the iron butt-end of his lance. It was a painful blow, which, however, left only a little bruise, and I thanked God the man did not kill me outright. Two of the men threw me

1. 14 miles north of Krishnapuram lies Peddakotla, only four miles distant from Tadamurri, where we know Father de la Fontaine was so honourably treated by the prince of that place. We have Togata christians who bear the surname Peddakotla.

down on the ground, and pulling off well-nigh all my clothes, took the money I carried about me for the support of my work, not leaving me even so much as my chalice and breviary. I had with me five catechists. It happened in the early part of the night. We were exhausted with fatigue after a whole day's march in the heat of the sun without having taken our meals. We took, therefore, shelter in a neighbouring village, but not a soul would give us any assistance. A Brahmin, taking pity on our misery, brought us a lump of brown sugar and a handful of flour¹ which we mixed in cold water and therewith stilled our hunger."²

At the very outset a fine church had been erected at Krishnapuram, where the first converts must have been made about the year 1712 or 1713. "It was," says Father le Gac, "the best church in the whole extent of our mission. We had it built solidly and substantially because it is the most promising place of all, where we hope to establish a flourishing community." It was, however, soon destroyed by fire; but Father de la Fontaine, who had baptized a great many converts there, had it rebuilt shortly after, in about the year 1715.³

1. Evidently a gloss. It must have been broiled Bengal gram, which the Telugus call "pappulu." It is eaten with jaggery and relished by the natives. In an emergency the missionary is satisfied with a meal of this sort.

2. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, VII, p. 210.

3. *Lett. Ed et C.*, VII, p. 211.

Father Le Gac ascribes the rapid growth of the mission of Krishnapuram and its surrounding villages in a great measure to the public reverence and respect bestowed upon the Superior of the mission, Father de la Fontaine. No doubt, Father Le Gac's humility forbade him to speak of his own popularity and the great success which attended his labours. The young prince¹ of Tadamurri especially was exceedingly respectful to Father de la Fontaine. Tadamurri is a small town 16 miles from Krishnapuram.² This young prince had pitched tents for the reception of the priest, and after treating him with the greatest honour, had him conducted back³ on the third day in his palanquin with 12 bearers. Such marks of public esteem have, says Father Le Gac, greatly contributed to the Christian religion being held in veneration in these parts⁴.

Not that the young converts were left in peace even here. The pagans—principally the gurus and Brahmins—did not cease to thwart them, and it is to be feared that many were deterred from embracing the truth for fear of their threats and molestations. That, however, the Church grew rapidly apace, may be inferred from the fact, of which we read in one of Father

1. Poligar.

2. To the north.

3. A son église éloigné de quatre a cinq lines.

4. And we may infer from the names still borne by our Christians, sprung from the villages in the neighbourhood of Tadamurri and Anantapur, the favour of those poligars must have greatly encouraged the people to enter the fold.

Le Gac's letters, that they actually gathered in numbers and shamed a *guru* out of the neighbourhood, who had come there to collect his "dues" from his disciples. This was at Kotta-Kota¹, a town eight miles to the south of Krishnapuram, where, just a little before, some of his disciples had been baptized. The *guru* took them severely to task for their desertion and threatened to declare them fallen from their caste. The Christians of the neighbouring villages, being informed of this, came in crowds to Kotta-Kota publicly defying the *guru* to prove the truth of his religion. His going about extracting money from his disciples and stamping on their backs on payment of a fee the mark of his god, instead of teaching them the road to virtue and heaven as the Christian *swami* did, was certainly a sure proof that his mission did not come from above.

The poligar of Kotta-Kota, hearing of the tumult raised by the *guru*'s imprudence, counselled him to quit the town as soon as possible. The *guru* understood that it was best to follow this advice. But the Christians, fearing he might try to intimidate the neophytes and catechumens elsewhere, followed him from village to village, everywhere holding public discussions, which had the marvellous effect not only of silencing and confounding this false teacher, but at the same time of disposing many pagans in favour of the Christian religion.

1. It now seems to be a village of no importance.

People who are at all acquainted with India, know how these so-called gurus go about the country at stated periods to extort money from their deluded adherents. We need not, therefore, enter into all the particulars given by Father Le Gac on that point. It may nevertheless be of special interest to our many weaver Christians, be they of the Sale or Togata caste (for it does not appear quite clear to which of the two castes it refers), to know how one of their ancestors, braving all opposition on the part of his pagan gurus, entered the fold.

His name was Rangappa¹ “de la caste des tisserands.” Even as a pagan he bore the reputation of an intelligent and just man. He evidently was desirous to serve God to the best of his lights, for he had placed himself under the guidance of different *gurus*. At last, however, he perceived the true light of salvation, and seeing it, followed it. A catechist was sent him, and being a man of influence, several pagans came over to his view. The *guru*, who lived only twelve miles from this village, hearing of the defection of one of his most fervent, that is, most profitable, disciples²—for Rangappa was a weaver of some means,—assembled all his followers assuring them of his determi-

1. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, VII, p. 354. What a pity his *intiperu* or surname is not given. Bhimishetti Josappa of Kondramutla related something similar of his forefathers, and there seems but little doubt that Rangappa is the man in question.

2. Celui dont il tirait le plus d'aumônes : *Lett Ed. et C.*, VII, p. 354.

nation to punish in some marked manner this traitor to the sect. It should be observed that once a man has chosen a *guru* and taken his mark or badge, which the Telugu people call *diksha* (దిక్ష), it is looked upon as a most shameful infidelity to leave him; which desertion is made to appear as odious and base as the infidelity of a woman who deserts her husband to go after another man.¹ The *guru* was mad with anger and urged his disciples to give him their support in bringing this deserter to account. But some among them took more prudent counsels. They remonstrated with the *guru*, much to his displeasure, that he must not forget that the catechist who was staying with Rangappa, would surely come forward to have a public discussion, and this, as they had experienced on other occasions, would not afford them much honour; that moreover, judging from Rangappa's well-known character, he was not likely to yield; that, besides, if stringent measures were resorted to, the prince, who favoured the Christian religion, would likely take cognisance of it and a public failure at his court might diminish the zeal and generosity of his disciples. All they could safely advise him to do for the present was to try to intimidate Rangappa and threaten him with severe measures if he persisted in his course. And this the *guru* did with a vengeance, making use in his wrath of all sorts of abusive invectives against the priest.

1. *Lett. Ed. et C.*, VII, p. 221.

Rangappa had before been the disciple of another *guru*. This wonderful director of souls had given him half a yard of cloth with the impress of his feet on it, as an infallible means for the pardon of his sins. Spreading it on the floor, flowers had to be placed on it, and, burning incense, Rangappa was enjoined to make his daily *puja*. Poor Rangappa had been the dupe of these and many other follies. But he was sincere, and God was pleased to open his eyes to the truth. After his baptism this good man used all his influence and zeal to make others share in the great treasure he had found.

Bhimishetti Josappa, an excellent old man at Kondramutla, told the compiler of these records, when at that village between the years 1892 and '96, among other traditional lore, that his grandfather or great grandfather (he¹ forgot which) had been a most zealous and ardent worshipper of the heathen gods before he became a Christian. Josappa was then about eighty years old. It is very probable that this Rangappa, of whom Father Le Gac speaks so highly, was the very man and therefore the first Christian parent of the Bhimishetti family, which up to our own days has been known as one of the best families in that caste. It appears the male line of that stock has died out. Josappa's only son, Gnanaya, died without male issue. His two daughters and their children live at Kondramutla and Firangipuram. More particulars of this and kindred families will be found in the sequence where the present day state of Christianity will be treated of.

1. The compiler.

We have now arrived at a period which we may well venture to call the most interesting in the whole history of the Telugu Christians—namely, the conversion of the Reddies and, in a more restricted sense, that of the branch called the Yelnati Redlu. Not that the conversion of the other castes is of less interest and value, but we have no definite data nor preserved records to satisfy our curiosity; whereas of this particular caste, we have a concise memoir in the letters of the priest who received them into the Church.

The first converts, moreover, of these Reddies belonged to a family of great power and wealth, whose example and influence soon drew others into the fold. They are now unmistakably the most numerous among our Telugu Christians, and form, by their social position and unwavering adherence to the faith, may we say, our mainstay and stronghold in the Telugu country. It is, besides, the only caste which has to some extent kept up its traditions and the remembrance of their forefathers, the pioneers in the faith. Hence to the present day their descendants recognise and honour at all domestic festivities the memorable name of the “Tumma” people as the first fruits in their caste of God’s redeeming grace. Again, of the thousands of converts made at the outset by the Jesuit Fathers, no caste nor *intiperu* or surname, is on record, except that of the “Tumma-varu,”¹ though, as we shall notice in its proper place,

1. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, VIII, p. 540.

we find also the name of the Ponnapati Reddies¹ given as the first converts of that branch of the Reddies at Pedd'Aricatla.

Though neither the date nor the year is given on which Tumma Rayappareddi was baptized, still we are able approximately to fix both.

He was an inhabitant of Maddigabu, in fact the headman of that place; but being very ill, was brought to Krishnapuram, the head-quarters of the priest, and was there baptized by Father Le Gac, the ninth day after his arrival. His low condition and the patient's own earnest desire determined the priest not to delay baptism, urged on thereto by another weighty reason—being obliged to leave for Chinna Ballapuram to assist the Christians in their troubles as he had learnt from them that the Mysore army was about to lay siege to their town.

FATHER LE GAC'S LETTER TO MR. LE CHEVALIER HERBERT, Gouverneur de Pondichery, in which the history of this remarkable conversion is given is dated Krishnapuram, le 10 Decembre, 1718.

He begins by stating that he gives an account of the most noteworthy events which have happened during the last two or three years. He distinctly mentions that the Reddy died on the eve of Christmas; and as it is further stated that he was four months laid up at the priest's house, we may safely conclude that the first of the Reddies became Christians at the

1. *Lett. Ed. et C.*, VIII.

end of the year 1715¹, and that Tumma Rayappa, as the first and moving cause, received baptism in September of that year.

The Yelnati Kapulu, who have all reason to be proud of their ancestors, should therefore celebrate the feast of their first convert on the 24th December; the Church always taking as the *natalitia* the day of death, which is the entry into life. They might, with becoming propriety, commemorate in a befitting manner the day of their delivery from pagan slavery on the 24th December 1915, as the bicentenary jubilee of that for-them-ever-memorable event.

We prefer to give the history of this remarkable conversion and all the circumstances connected therewith in Father Le Gac's own words, though his two letters occupy 50 pages in print; eliminating only such portions of it as have no bearing on the subject. It is well, however, that the reader's attention should be drawn to Father Le Gac's practice of speaking of himself invariably in the third person, as "he," "the priest," "the missionary."

"The conversion of the head of a large village of the Reddy caste was accompanied by circumstances of so singular and edifying a nature, that I cannot forego giving you all particulars. For two years this man was troubled with a disease which was considered incurable, and by most people ascribed to a malefice or spell. As he was a rich man, neither

1. Eight Reddies were baptized about the same time as Rayappa, and more before the end of the year.

pains nor expenses were spared to effect a cure. But all to no purpose. The Brahmins, as usual in such cases, exhorted him to appease the anger of the gods by sacrifices and especially by liberal alms. The sick man, tired of these remedies and useless expenses, fell into a state of the blackest melancholy. In his despair he even asked for poison, that he might terminate his sufferings by death.

“When the matter had come to this pass, a zealous Christian¹ happened to be in that village on some business, and spoke of the wonderful power of the true God. The Reddy, who questioned him regarding this new religion and the white *sanyasi* who had come to preach the same, resolved, after several interviews with this stranger, to be further instructed in the Christian faith, and asked that some one might be sent to assist him in this matter. The Christian informed him that there was a catechist residing at Dharmavararam. The younger brother of the Reddy, named Kondappa, at once decided to go and fetch him. It is surprising how this young pagan had always openly shown his aversion for the pagan gods. He was always opposed to their sacrifices or any ceremonies which might be performed in the house to their honour, which gave rise to many a domestic quarrel. After

1. Bhimishetti Josappa of Kondramutla gave no doubt the right version and was most probably correct in asserting that this Christian was one of his ancestors. We have seen before that the Sales were converted a couple of years previous to the Reddies.

his baptism he assured me that he always felt an innate dislike for the pagan deities.

“This Kondappa then set out for Dharmavaram¹ and begged of the catechist to accompany him to his village. The latter who had heard that, in the country whence the Reddy came, they had lately cut off a hand and an ear of some strangers for a trivial cause, was anything but eager to comply with this request, and made excuses under various pretexts. But Kondappa was not to be reasoned out of his purpose, so that at last the catechist consented, but managed to enter the village unobserved. Nor did he stay longer than three days, always filled with fear that some harm might befall him similar to that of those unfortunate strangers.

“A few days after the catechist’s departure, the Reddy’s uneasiness and his anxiety to be instructed further in the Christian truth became so urgently strong that Kondappa set out once more to fetch the catechist. Arrived at Dharmavaram, he learnt with satisfaction that the priest himself, the great Roman Sanyasi, had returned to Krishnapuram. Without tarrying, he together with a relative of his and the Dharmavaram catechist, started at once for that village². On his arrival he told the Priest all that had happened and the ardent desire of his brother to be instructed fully in the Christian doctrine. ‘Let me

1. A large town about 22 miles south-east of Maddigubba.

2. 15 miles S. E. of Dharmavaram.

bring the sick man here,' said he, 'so that he may have the honour of dying at your feet.'

"The priest, having administered a severe reprimand to the catechist for his timidity and want of zeal, consented to Kondappa's proposal; 'but,' he added, 'remember, if it is only your brother's recovery you are seeking, I can guarantee no such cure. Our profession is not to administer medicines but to instruct in the law of God.'

"Kondappa hastened back to his village.' With the consent of his relatives it was decided to take the patient without further delay to Krishapuram. Kondappa's old spirit of aversion for their gods prompted him to suggest that the idols in the house should be removed, for, said he, if the priest hears that we are still attached to our false gods, he will naturally conclude that we are only bent on our brother's bodily health. The people in the house were not so easily brought over to that view. It was a drastic step to take. The gods might take their revenge. 'As to that,' said Kondappa, 'I take the anger of all these pretended gods upon me,' and so saying, he gathered all the idols in a sack and threw them in a well outside the village¹.

"The following day the sick Reddy was placed on a stretcher, and accompanied by twenty of his relatives, after a journey of two days arrived at

1. Bhimishetti Josappa's and Gadè Shewreddi's (of Tubadu) traditional version is thus literally true.

Krishnapuram¹. The patient's condition was indeed low and pitiful. Besides a continuous fever, he had such a violent cough that one feared he might die of suffocation in one of these attacks. His hands and feet were covered with very painful sores. In this state he was taken into our presbytery with three of his people to attend to his wants. He had not been with us eight days, when one night he gave such a loud cry that the Father, startled in his sleep, hastened to his side and found him in a spasm like that of a dying man. But scarcely had he blessed him with holy water and made the sign of the cross over him, when he cried out: 'Oh Swami! he was holding me by the throat. I beg of you not to defer any longer baptizing me.' The following day he was taken into the church, where the sacramental waters were poured over him.

"From that day he gradually improved and we began to entertain hopes of his recovery. Just then a messenger arrived in all haste from Chinna Ballapuram begging the priest to come at once as the Mysore army threatened to lay siege to their town. The priest started at once. On his arrival at Ballapuram he had the happiness to baptize fourteen catechumens. Eighteen had been baptized two months before. After a considerable stay, just as he was on the point of leaving for the purpose of visiting Devanapalle and Punganur, he received information that

1. The distance is 36 miles as the crow flies.

the Reddy's condition was growing worse. He accordingly decided to return to Krishnapuram in the hope of baptizing some of the Reddy's relatives. Eight had been baptized already and twenty were preparing for it¹.

"When it became known in the Reddy's village that he had but a few days to live, his eldest brother, a staunch Dasary—that is to say, one who was wholly devoted to the worship of Vishnu—came to see him and to persuade him to return home. The neophyte answered firmly that he would never consent to it. His life was in the hands of the true God. He might dispose of it according to His will. Whereupon Kondappa, addressing his elder brother, said : 'You see that our brother is perfectly resigned to God. I brought him here, not to save his body, but his soul. I am aware of your intentions. I shall on no account allow him to be taken back to our village and thus imperil his salvation.' 'Our people are so anxious to see him before he dies,' said the elder brother. The sick man, hearing this, replied : 'Let them come here as others have done already. As for me I will never deny or forsake the true God in whose goodness and mercy I have placed my trust. Where shall I find a father like this kind priest at whose feet I hope to die.'

"And indeed the good man expired on the eve of Christmas. Many of his relations had come in the

1. This shows that on the occasion of Rayappa's baptism some of his relatives had been baptized as well—a sure sign that those good people were in earnest.

morning to have a last glimpse of their dear old friend. They had been well instructed by the catechist and now asked to be received in the church. The priest, believing it to be more prudent under the present critical circumstances to abide the turn of events, said: 'Perhaps you have all this while been living in the hope of seeing your brother recover, and now you find him near his end. Allow your enthusiasm to abate and your faith to be further tried and confirmed.' But as they persisted so earnestly in their request and with such an unflinching and firm disposition, the priest gladly gave way and baptized fourteen of their number.

"In the evening, whilst giving the usual catechetical instruction in the church to the assembled Christians, the priest was suddenly called for as the Reddy was in his agony. The Christians all followed him. Filled with emotion he could hardly recite the prayers of the dying, his tears mingling with the tears and sobs of the neophytes who pressed around him. The Reddy's desire was accomplished. He died in the arms of the missionary.

"What struck the priest as most remarkable was that, instead of the usual cries of despair, every one, as if in a sudden outburst of relief, gave expression to feelings of joy and contentment: 'How happy and consoling,' they exclaimed, 'it is thus to die surrounded by numerous Christian friends sending up their prayers to heaven!'

“The funeral ceremonies on the day following contributed no less to confirm the newly baptized relatives in their faith. The body was carried on a bier covered with coloured cloth, adorned with flowers and surrounded by numerous lights. All the Christians two by two followed the body in procession reciting aloud the prayers of the Church. The pagans stood amazed and surprised. For be it observed that the devotion of the heathens on similar occasions resolves itself into making the air resound with doleful and harassing cries whilst they strike their cheeks and their breasts as those ‘who have no hope,’ and after placing a handful of rice by the side of the corpse, burn or bury it.

“After the relatives of the Reddy had returned to their village, the pagans loaded them with insulting reproaches. ‘Was it necessary,’ they said, ‘to carry away from home a dying man to make him die in the hands of a stranger? What had they gained by depriving his numerous friends and relations of doing him the last honours in their midst? Is his death not a sign of the anger of the gods whom you have made him forswear?’ ‘You speak like blind people,’ replied the Christians, ‘does not the salvation of the soul far exceed that of the body? Had you, like us, witnessed the exceeding kindness and charity with which the Reddy has been treated during the last four months of his illness, far from blaming our conduct, you would have a more favourable opinion of the Christian law.’

“However, the ever increasing annoyances and scoffing remarks on the part of the pagans determined the Christians to write to the priest begging him to come in person to their village, and, giving him the assurance of their undiminished fervour, informed him that thirty more persons were disposed to receive baptism.

“The priest gladly acceded to their request. At a little distance from the village these new children in the faith came out to meet him accompanied by village peons and the principal men of the place. He thus made his entry in the blaze of glaring torches and to the sound of music and drums. An immense crowd had gathered. A number of people from the neighbouring villages had assembled partly from mere curiosity, partly from a long-cherished desire to see this strange *sanyasi* of whom they had heard so much. The Christians, encouraged by the presence of their priest, were not slow in turning the occasion to their advantage, and began to severely lecture the pagans: ‘Do not call us fools any longer. Compare your *gurus* with ours. Your *gurus*—what do they seek but your money? Our *guru* expects nothing and only works for and desires our eternal happiness. What can you answer to the doctrine he preaches? Is it not right and just and reasonable to adore only one Supreme Being? We should call you mad for worshipping dumb idols of brass and stone.’

“It was a pleasure to watch the fervour and eagerness of these neophytes confounding and persuading

their pagan brethren. Above all, they rejoiced to see the Brahmins, who are looked up to with awe for their learning, unable to reply to the arguments of the priest on different religious subjects. During the short time of his stay among these good people, the priest had the consolation of administering the sacrament of baptism to over 50 people¹.

“Shortly after his departure, a wedding, which was to take place in a neighbouring village, put these new Christians to a severe test. The bridegroom was one of the newly baptized. An arrangement had been agreed to by the parents of the bride that no pagan or idolatrous ceremonies of any kind should be allowed to take place; which agreement was strictly adhered to. The pagan *guru*, Sivalingam, our greatest opponent in those parts, with a large following of his disciples, hastened to the village resolved either to stop the marriage, the celebration of which was already in process, on the plea that his sanction had not been obtained, or, failing this, to levy a heavy and prohibitive fine. Unsuccessful in both, he vented his wrath in abusing the Christian religion and threatened to carry his plaint to the prince’s court, where he would not fail to get the Christians punished and this new religion proscribed.

“Prasanappa Naidu² (the name of the Governor of this country which is called Andevāru) is a prince

1. The number of Christian Reddies had therefore by this already increased to over 72.

2. The Poligar of Anantapur from 1696-1720.

enlightened but of an inflexible character. Two examples of great severity had procured him this reputation. On a visit to one of his fortresses some malcontents had conspired to shut him up for the rest of his days and to substitute his brother. The prince, secretly advised of this plot, unexpectedly took his departure and hurried back to his capital Anantapur. His sudden return threw the conspirators into confusion and dismay. With the exception of his brother he had them all put to death. On another occasion when, on a journey, his bearers, thinking he was fast asleep, allowed themselves some disrespectful remarks regarding his person, he pretended not to have overheard them. But a few days later, he assembled the chief ministers of his court and asked them what chastisement should be meted out to men who were guilty of speaking contemptuously of their master. With one accord all answered that such men deserved death. The following day they were executed. A rigid justice of this kind is not common in India, where, as a rule, the greatest crimes are only punished with banishment or some pecuniary fine.

“This *guru*, then, of whom I made mention, betook himself to Anantapur to lay his complaint before the prince. But unsuccessful in his endeavour to obtain an audience, one day he, covered all over with ashes, and sword unsheathed, waited for the prince outside the palace, and boldly approaching the palanquin as it came near, in a volume of words poured out his grievances against the Christians and their *guru*. The

prince, little moved, quietly answered that, as the Roman sanyasis did not reside in his territory but in the Ballāram country, he had better take his complaint to that court.

“These attempts on the part of this *guru*, which no doubt distracted the Christians a great deal, were shortly after followed by another severe trial. The army of the Mahrattas, whose country is situated in about the same latitude as that of Goa (*à la hauteur de Goa*), makes frequent invasions in that part of India which is inhabited by the Reddies.¹ They lately wrought great destruction, the Christians sustaining a considerable loss in grain and in cattle. When anything untoward happens to the Christians, the pagans ascribe this at once to their having left the religion of their fathers. It is nothing less, they say, than a manifest punishment of our angry gods. The Christians know happily how to meet such arguments.

1. The Mahomedan nobles, in their internecine quarrels for the mastery in the Carnatic, had been forced to engage the services of the the Mahrattas who, under Hussain Ali in 1714, obtained the right to collect “the fourth and the tenth of the revenues of the six Soubahs of the Deccan and of the tributary states of Tanjore, Mysore, and Trichinopoly.”

“This acknowledgment of a Mahratta right to demand a portion of the revenues of these districts, known by the term ‘Chout’ was fruitful of misfortune and trouble to the inhabitants of the Carnatic provinces, for the Mahratta leaders found it remunerative to make inroads into the country, for the purpose of levying what they called their dues, whenever they happened to have no more important expedition on hand.”—*N. Arcot Dt. Manual of 1895*, Vol. I, p. 47.

They have learnt that God, in allowing such visitations, has no other end in view than to keep them humble and detached from the goods of this world in order that they may aspire after the greater and imperishable goods of the next. What ought, however, to strike the heathen is the edifying example of our Christians, who, notwithstanding their own loss, assist and help those who have been left destitute by these unfortunate wars.

“In all this trouble and affliction these good people did not abandon their intention of building a church in their village. They deputed two of their number to Krishnapuram, a town 36 miles (*douze lieues*) from there to represent to the priest the difficulty of coming so far with their families to attend church, assuring him at the same time that the congregation would undoubtedly increase more rapidly if they had a church of their own. The Father was perfectly convinced not only of its utility, but also of its necessity; but the difficulty was how to obtain from the prince the required concession to build and establish himself in his territory. It was a serious consideration, no doubt. The priest made, however, a preliminary attempt to sound the mind of the prince and his disposition towards Christianity, by sending a catechist with an offering of some grapes—a fruit which is highly esteemed in India because of its scarcity. The prince accepted the present with complimentary returns of his appreciation to the priest and a message that he would be pleased to see him. This favourable reception gave us hope of success, and from this moment the priest

placing his trust in the powerful intercession of St. Joseph, had no other thought or desire than to establish himself in the country of Andevāru.

“He started, therefore, at an early date for Anantapur. The prince, who had been advised of his coming, sent his chief minister to receive him at the entrance to the town. With numerous torches and accompanied by the band, the priest was conducted to the palace. Maldars (peons)¹ ran to and fro to beg of him to hasten his steps as the prince was impatient to see him. The prince awaited him in his spacious audience hall, which, like a theatre, was raised three or four feet from the ground. The flat roof was supported by high columns. In front was a large open yard with two fountains—one near the hall, the other about sixty feet further down amidst two rows of trees. The floor of the hall was covered with a Turkish carpet, on which the prince was seated in oriental fashion, leaning on a large embroidered cushion. By his side lay a dagger and a sword whose handles were of agate enriched with gold. His relations and chief officers were round about him. The Brahmins occupied the lower end of the hall and the open yard was filled with subordinates and soldiers.

“Directly the prince perceived the priest, he rose and, having saluted him, begged him to take a seat on the cushions near his person. The priest declined this

1. Father Le Gac always speaks of soldiers, a sort of sepoys probably.

honour and seated himself a few paces lower down. Then the catechist who accompanied him deposited at the feet of the prince a terrestrial globe, a map of the world, and some other curiosities. After a few conventional words, the priest naturally turned the conversation on the almighty power of the Supreme Being, on His immensity, His eternity and the purpose for which He had created man. The prince, listening attentively, asked the Brahmins to question the priest as to what he thought of their sacrifices.¹

“The dispute lasted over an hour and a half. When the priest took his leave, the prince, rising from his seat, made a profound obeisance with his hands folded on his breast. The priest had apartments assigned to him for the night. The following morning two Brahmins came to take him once more to the palace. His catechists followed him. The prince showed him even more reverence than the previous day. Coming outside to receive him, he saluted him saying, ‘I look upon you as my own priest,’ and insisted that he and his catechists should take precedence in entering the hall. The assembly was more

1. Here follows the account of a long discussion (we would now perhaps look upon it as a sort of diatribe) on pagan sacrifices, on the metamorphosis of their gods, on the vedas and other kindred subjects, in which the prince took a lively part, siding with the priest on all counts, the adversaries seemingly being silent. We have taken the liberty to omit it, partly because of its length and partly because the matter is treated in a somewhat antiquated fashion, which, though perfectly correct and true, looks a trifle stale in the light of what the modern Brahmin would advance in defence.

numerous than the day before. The discussion took very much the same form, the prince himself being the principal leader. Refuting with great animation the doctrine of the Brahmins on Trimurti, he said addressing a Vishnuvite, 'You take it that Vishnu is the first supreme god;' and turning to another, 'You believe it is Brahma; according to the principles of my sect, I say it is Iswaren. Let us first agree on one Supreme Being, and then we can continue our dispute with the *sanyasi*.' 'These three divinities,' interrupted a Brahmin, 'are but one god.' 'That cannot be,' answered the prince. 'We read in our books that the five heads which you ascribe to Brahma were cut off by Iswaren and we find nowhere that he, Brahma, had the power to restore them.'¹

"The result of this interview was that permission was granted for the building of a church in any part of the prince's territory. The prince wished that he should build it at Anantapur, so that he might always have the priest, near him. The priest, however, begged of him to be allowed to erect for the present a church at Maddigubba where he had a good number of disciples; moreover, said he, this village being only four

1. This discussion has also been curtailed for the same reason. Only the above short extract has been given to show how little faith this good Poligar had in the pagan gods. In fact, as we shall see further on, the grace of God was manifestly working in his soul. We know he died a sudden and unforeseen death. At the same time we have reason to hope that God rewarded his good intentions. No one can see the heart and truly judge the motive of it but God alone. External acts alone men can judge.

miles from his capital, the priest would always be within easy reach.

"Before giving the priest leave to depart, the prince showed him the palace, and his horses, richly caparisoned, were made to promenade before him. The prince, then having gone out for a walk, happened to meet one of the Christian Reddies on the road. Addressing him, he said: 'Build as quickly as you can a house for the Roman *sanyasi*. I give you leave to cut all the wood you require. But I wish him very much to have a house at Anantapur as well. Try to bring him over to my views. Tell him I shall call as I should like to see him once more before he leaves.'

"And, in fact, having finished his walk and allowed the princess to return to the palace with the elephants and horse and the greater part of his retinue, he himself mounting a palanquin, accompanied by a few attendants, came to visit the missionary in his lodgings. He gave a sign to his men to withdraw and then exclaimed: 'Well, *swamy*, there is only one thing now that keeps me back. If you can make me conquer that, I'll be your disciple this moment. I wear the *lingam* as you see. (It was a beautifully worked gold case set with stones in which was concealed the indecent emblem called *lingam*. He wore it attached to his coat, very much as the knights wear the cross of their order). 'Of course,' said he, 'I do not in any way consider this as a sort of divinity, nor do I worship it. But, as you are well aware, it is the distinctive

mark of my caste. If I were to give it up, I would be called mad and my whole family would rise up against me.'

"Prince," said the priest, 'this seems to you impossible. But the God I preach to you will give you grace to surmount all difficulties.' 'No,' he exclaimed, 'that can never be, the God you adore must either save or damn me with my *lingam*. I look upon our idols and their temples as a sham. I feel like destroying them all. But as to the *lingam*, I shall never part with it.'

"Moved with compassion, the priest then taking the prince's hands and pressing them in his, said: 'Do not be too hasty. You have time to reflect on the important truths which I announce to you, and God will second the efforts of his humble minister. He has not created you for the flames of hell. He will dissipate your fears, if you will ask Him with confidence. I and my disciples shall pray that He may give you the necessary light of mind and strength of heart.'

"The prince seemed now more at ease and repeated his request that the priest should establish himself here in his capital. 'I came,' he added, 'specially to see you on that account. You say that you prefer to preach the way to heaven to the simple and the poor rather than the rich. But I assure you, I do not consider all this pomp and the goods I possess as my own. I did not bring them with me at my birth, nor shall I take them when I die. My father possessed

all these, and now he lies in his tomb. I have them now, and others will enjoy them after me. You must, on no account, refuse my request.'

"Such Christianlike reflections took the priest and his neophytes, some of whom were present, greatly by surprise. 'It seems,' said the priest, 'that God, who has inspired you with these generous sentiments, has undoubtedly great designs regarding your person. You desire me to build a *mattam* (church) here. Very well, I agree to it¹ and hope it may be for God's glory. I shall then be able to see you more frequently and converse with you on God's divine attributes and on that all-important matter—the working out of your salvation.'

"The prince, filled with joy, renewed to the Christian Reddies the grant that they might cut as much wood as was necessary for the construction of their church, and added that they need not even spare the trees of his garden (*tope*) at Maddigubba.² May God's mercy bless these happy beginnings and strengthen the prince to overcome the obstacles which will surely rise up against his conversion."

A little over three years later, that is, if the date can be rigorously relied upon,³ Father Le Gac

1. We do not read of its accomplishment.

2. *Sans épargner même les arbres de son jardin de plaisance qui est à Madigubba.* This looks a bit over-poetic. It must be a gloss of the editor, who probably did not understand the meaning of *tope*, which, no doubt, is what is meant here.

3. We may somewhat doubt the dates given in the *Lett: Ed. et Cur.* Some of the letters are so abnormally long that one is inclined to believe many of them were thrown into one, especially as here and there a subject-matter does not quite tally with the date assigned. Other letters again bear no date whatever.

continues this interesting subject in a second letter to Mr. le Chevalier Hébert Gouverneur de Pondichéry dating it

BALLAPURAM CE 12 Janvier, 1722¹.

.....
 “I finished the last letter I had the honour of writing to you with an account of the protection Prasanappa Naidu, who is the governor of the Andevāru country, accorded to the preachers of the Gospel. I told you that not only did he give permission for the church of Maddigubba but furnished the wood as well. This monument of Christian worship in the midst of paganism could not but irritate the enemies of the Christian faith. In fact, the Dasaries, adorers of Vishnu, were only waiting for an occasion to vent their rage.

“The temporary absence of the priest² during his visit to other mission stations gave them an opportunity. They assembled in a large body at Allumuru³ which numbers several Christian families. They intended to pillage the houses of the neophytes, and then proceeding to Maddigubba, which is only a mile and a half from this village, to set fire to the materials ready for the building of the church. In fact, the Reddy, who is the head of the Christians in that neighbourhood,⁴ coming home, found his house filled with

1. *Lett: Ed. et Cur.*, VII, 401.

2. Father Le Gac speaking as usual in the third person.

3. Some of our Reddies bear the name of that village.

4. Likely the head of these villages, now called Munsif.

these seditious people, so much so, that he could hardly make himself a way through the crowd. Without entering into any discussion with them, he cited the ringleaders among the Dasaries before the Brahmins of the village¹ and in the name of the prince held them (the karnams) responsible for the action of these men. The Brahmins thereupon advised the Dasaries to wait till they should have learnt the good pleasure of the prince, whom they would forthwith inform of the matter. That very evening, the prince's answer arrived. He despatched some Mahomedan peons with orders that the Dasaries should come to Anantapur with their complaint against the Christians. An immense crowd gathered. Dasaries of Anantapur and neighbouring villages, Brahmins, Vishnuvaites as well as Lingaites, who took up the common cause, and a number of merchants and other people swelled the throng. The multitude grew to such an extent that the prince, who was just going out for a walk, turned back and re-entered the palace.

“Aware of their design, he sent an officer to them with the following message: ‘The prince has already full knowledge of your accusations against the Christians, namely, that they break your idols, that they preach against your gods, that they follow a religion which overthrows the customs of your ancestors. These are your complaints. The prince is too just not to give you a hearing. He wishes you to summon your

1. Evidently the Karnams.

most celebrated gurus, and, as soon as the Roman Sanyasi returns, I shall give you a chance of establishing the truth of your accusations in public court, of which I myself shall gladly be the arbiter.'

"On his return journey from Ballapuram, where he had celebrated the feast of Christmas, the priest apprized of these matters, and urged by the desire to see and comfort his new Christians, made straight for Maddigubba¹. On passing through Dharmavaram, a large town, the Christians of that place² hearing of his intention of calling on his way at the palace, thought this an imprudent venture. Though the prince had, no doubt, shown himself favourable to our cause, still he was a heathen. The general feeling of discontent raised by the Dasaries had assumed a serious aspect. The prince's good intentions may have changed. In any case it was better, they argued, to first consult the Maddigubba Reddies, and through them sound his present dispositions.

"But the priest had taken his decision, and not allowing himself to be deterred by considerations of any kind, left for Anantapur. On his arrival there he sent one of the catechists to inform the prince and to request a few minutes' interview.

1. That is, without first visiting his head-quarters at Krishnapuram which lay more to the east (*see map*).

2. One should like to know who these Christians were in this "ville considerable" and how many. Probably they were gold and black smiths, descendants of whom now inhabit the Mysore territory. One family lives at Atmakur near Yaleru at the present day.

“‘Is it possible,’ said the prince, ‘the Roman Sanyasi has returned so unexpectedly?’ ‘He is awaiting your orders outside the towngate,’ replied the catechist. ‘Does the priest want a special request to enter my house? Is he not always welcome?’ And, turning towards one of the Brahmins, he said : ‘Go at once and tell the Sanyasi that I am happy and impatient to see him. The prince received him with the greatest demonstrations of honour and friendship. He at once summoned the Brahmins and made us enter into a warm discussion on almost the same points I have spoken of in my first letter. The priest dwelt for a considerable time on the perfections of God none of which were applicable to the Indian deities.

“‘There is no necessity’ intervened the prince, ‘of enlarging any further on that subject. What the Sanyasi told us some three months ago is still fresh in my memory. Are you not obliged,’ said he, addressing the Brahmins, ‘to acknowledge, as the priest remonstrated with you in that last meeting, that Vishnu was metamorphosed into a swine? Show me the propriety of a god doing that and then I shall agree with you on the rest. But, of course, this you are not able to do, and hence let us own that our history is but a tissue of fables.’

“‘Vishnu adopted that device to exterminate a redoubtable giant,’ replied the Brahmins. ‘This,’ said the priest, ‘is changing the argument. The question is not what caused him to do so, but whether it was not indecent and foolish of a god to do such a thing.’

‘There is no need,’ remarked the prince, ‘of pushing matters to a point,’ and then observing that one of the Brahmin Vishnuvaites made use of disrespectful language towards the priest, assuming a severe and dignified tone, said : ‘Do not forget to whom you are speaking and in whose presence you are.’ It gave the priest a chance to retort and attack his adversaries in their personal domain. ‘What shall I say of the pride and of the arrogant behaviour of some of your gurus in this part of India. Do they not, on entering the houses of their disciples, have their feet washed by the principal person in the family and give them this water to drink as something holy and divine? I could say worse things, but the sacredness of my office forbids me to reveal such mysterious iniquities.’

“This somewhat startled the prince. It is specially in the caste of Lingaites that these infamous practices are common. He, therefore, took up the matter himself and diverted the course saying : ‘There is not an artifice the gurus leave untried to extort contributions from their disciples. These may remonstrate, pleading their poverty and their extreme indigence. Have the gurus any compassion or commiseration? Have they not the effrontery to tell them to borrow the money or mortgage their wives and children?’ Then addressing a Visnuvaite guru, Adjaculu by name : ‘Can you lay any such charge against the Roman Sanyasies?’ ‘Why must these men come here,’ was the despondent reply, ‘to reduce us to beggary?’

“Towards the end of this audience, observing that the prince made no allusion to the great commotion the Dasaries had stirred up against the Christians, the priest thought it well to comment in a general way on the opposition they met with every where, and spoke as follows: ‘There is nothing surprising in the fact that truth should have its assailants. Man, whose nature is opposed to constraint, does not suffer his evil inclinations to be checked. Vice, so says one of your poets, is to man like a delicious beverage, whereas truth seems to him poison. If the religion of the true God would only permit one of the vices sanctioned by the different sects of this country, we could expect a great many followers. But as this religion is so pure and holy that it condemns even the shadow of evil, is it to be wondered at that it is so much decried and that so many enemies should rise up against it? My confidence, however, is in the protection of the true God whom I adore and whose law I preach. With no other object did I leave my country than to procure His glory and to show people the only and sure way to heaven. His powerful arm will protect me against all efforts of the enemy. If I did not fully rely on His assistance, do you think I would be so rash as to battle against so large a body as you, undoubtedly, constitute, and that, too, with the daily fear of losing my life? Should it, however, come to such a pass, I shall consider it a great honour to sacrifice myself in testimony of the truth I announce;’ and then turning towards

the prince: 'It is this true God, whose glories I preach, who raises up men lovers of the truth, men ready to take up its defence and uphold it with their authority. It is to this true God that I owe the marks of honour and esteem I receive at your hands, and it is to Him I render thanks for the kind dispositions with which He has inspired you to grant me leave to preach and to build a temple to that true God on your estate.' 'Allow me in return to say,' answered the prince, 'that I esteem your coming amongst us a great gain. I have obtained singular blessings since you have been pleased to enter my territory.'

"The priest now judged it a fit moment to show the prince in the presence of the assembled crowd the "patent"¹ from the Nabob of Arcot which procured for us the recovery of our church and the abatement of the storm at Devanapalle. It reads as follows:—

"Ladootoola² Khan Nabab to all Fausdars, Rajahs, Quelidars, Paleacandlu and all whom it may concern :

"The Roman Sanyasies have churches in the Carnatic, which they visit to instruct their disciples. They are penitents who profess the truth and whose probity is well known to us. We respect them and have great regard for them. Hence it is our will that they and their disciples be treated everywhere with favour and without molestation of any kind. Such is our command."

"The prince, having finished reading this document aloud, expressed his entire agreement with its

1. See page 107.

2. Sâdat-ullâ who governed the Carnatic from 1710 till his death in 1732.

sentiments. He was quite ready to issue a similar order for the extent of his dominion and emphatically reiterated his orders that all the timber required for the building of the church was to be furnished *gratis*. In taking leave of the priest, he expressed his desire to be present at the first feast to be celebrated at Maddigubba.

“Whilst the priest was building the church, two messengers brought him a letter from the Moorish Governor of Manimadagu, a small town about 55 miles from Maddigubba. This governor, having heard that a Roman Sanyasy had come to the country to preach a new doctrine, was curious to see and entertain him. Such also was the context of his letter which was written on paper adorned with silver flowers, and ran as follows :

“I, Secu-Abdulla-Rahimu-Khan, Governor of the town and fortress of Manimaddagu, reverence the feet of him who shines forth in all good qualities, who moves in the highest divine contemplation, who instructs in all the ways of the laws of the Sovereign Master etc.

Since long I have been desirous of enjoying your presence and you alone know when this happy hour shall arrive. The two persons I have sent will find out your good pleasure. I finish with profoundest and repeated reverences.

“The priest having little inclination to satisfy the mere curiosity of this Moor, and no hope of doing any good, gave him a declining but courteous answer.¹

“A few days after he received a similar letter from the wife of the Nabob of Chirpi. She had

1. As of no great import the answer is omitted.

already sent twice to Ballapuram thinking the priest was there. The latter excused himself on the plea that he had to visit his Christians in their different villages. But the woman sent a second and more pressing letter, in which, to secure a better success, she granted him permission to build churches in any place he might choose: Chirpi, Colalam, or Kotta-Kota, all of them important and populous towns. In the hope of evading her importunities and at the same time in some way to satisfy her desire, the priest sent a catechist who was to find out her intentions. But she declined to open her mind to any one but the Sanyasy himself, to whom, she said, she had some important secrets to communicate. Without her husband's permission she could not leave the palace, otherwise she would be most willing herself to visit the priest. Satisfied with this information, the priest left next day for Kotta-Kota,¹ where he was at once admitted to the apartments of the Moorish princess.² First it was some pretended illness on which she wished to consult him. The priest said he had no knowledge of medicines.³ His profession was to teach the truth. Another cause of great anxiety to her was to know the state of her eldest son, who was being detained at the court of the Moghul until such time as

1. Kotta-Kota Doorgam, 33 miles S. W. of Maddigubba.

2. No doubt behind the usual perdah.

3. The Jesuits had a great deal of knowledge in that line. In fact, Father Le Gac cured the Rajah (Poligar) of Anantapur. His way of dealing with this Bhagam is however clear.

his father should pay off a large debt. At last she came to the real point.

“Four or five months ago some Fakirs (name of Moorish penitents) had made her believe that, amongst other things, they knew the secret of making gold. For this, they had to incur some expenses, which, of course, she had willingly given. Several workmen were allowed to assist them. It took two to three months to get the different plants required. They had to be pounded, and the metals necessary for this composition, had to be got ready. They then melted a quantity of copper, which they reduced to small ingots. These ingots were to be changed into gold by soaking them in water. Having tested this water, they presented to the lady two or three pieces of gold, which only wanted a few carats to make them perfect. To obtain this object nothing further was required than to soak in this water for three days some pearls and precious stones. But we shall have to pass, they said, these three days in prayer without eating or drinking and without speaking to any one. The lady was simple enough to give them her jewels. They passed the first day in prayer, but on the night of the second day they decamped with the pearls and diamonds confided to them. She was in great trouble. What would her husband say when hearing of this heavy loss? She had been persuaded that the priests know the secret of making gold, and hence, with tears in her eyes she besought him to help her out of this trouble.

"The lesson taught by her sad experience had not remedied her foolish belief in the imaginary secret of the philosopher's stone. She would, on no account, accept the priest's ignorance of that sort of alchymy, but pressed her request with greater determination and called at last her son, who was in command during the Nabob's absence, to help her in persuading the priest. Fortunately, her son was soon convinced of the priest's sincerity and allowed him to depart.

"In the meantime, notwithstanding the plottings of the Dasaries, preparations were being made for the celebration of Easter¹ in the new church of Maddigubba. The prince having expressed a wish to be present, the priest sent his catechists with an invitation to honour the feast with his presence. Being indisposed, he had not given audience for some days. The catechists retired for the night to a guardroom at the door of his fort. The Dasaries were assembled there, but fortunately did not recognize them. One of their gurus was with them and they resolved that meetings and discussions with the Roman Sanyasy only turned to their own dishonour, and hence they must take other and surer measures to put a stop to his preaching. They knew of the coming feast. They would go there *en masse* each armed with a little pot of powder². 'If we in the tumult storm his house, with shouts of "Govinda!

1. The first public festival was held at Maddigubba Easter 1719.

2. *Des granades* = cannon crackers.

Govinda !” he is sure to fall into our hands in the confusion.’

“The prince was in bed when he received the invitation. He wished to get up and keep his promise ; but was dissuaded from exposing himself to the air. He asked one of his near relatives to take his place and gave orders for a numerous escort of soldiers. Though perfectly aware of the plottings of the Dasaries, he took so little notice of it that the next day he sent of his own accord his own band and a large quantity of fireworks which added greatly to the success of the feast.

“The first Easter was celebrated with great solemnity and in perfect order, the prince’s representative being present at all our ceremonies. The people were edified. Forty persons received baptism, and the heads of four families came to place their lingams at the feet of the priest. They and their families are now being instructed and we have reason to believe that they will become fervent Christians. There is not a mission in India where the faith has made such rapid progress in so short a time and where the pagans seem better disposed than here. Many no doubt are bound to idolatry by fatal ties. If that obstacle can be removed, the harvests will be still more abundant.

“As soon as the prince’s condition had sufficiently improved, the priest proceeded to Anantapur to thank him for the great marks of esteem he had shown on the occasion of the feast.

“ At that time there was great talk of the famous sacrifice called ‘ Yegyam’¹ which had just been held by order of the prince, who had not been able to resist the importunities of the Brahmins. The tank had breached, which caused a great inundation, and the prince had been persuaded that it would occur again if this sacrifice were not offered. It cost the prince over 11,000 livres.² .

“ Whilst with the prince, the priest seized the occasion to question the Brahmins as to the object they had in view by running the prince into this expenditure and what advantage he would reap from it. ‘ Do you not know,’ said they, ‘ that those who have the sacrifice of *yegyam* performed will obtain *swargam*, that place of delights.’ ” ‘ And what are those delights?’ asked the priest. ‘ They are of all kinds, but above all there is a tree there which furnishes all the delicious food one can desire.’ ‘ Is there nothing else?’ inquired the priest. Here the Brahmins remained silent. ‘ I know well,’ continued the priest, ‘ that shame prevents you answering me. Must I reveal the indecencies which your historians report of that *swargam*? The names are well known of the four women-prostitutes who make up its delight. We need not go into that any further. Your *swargam*, in my estimation, is an assembly of lewdness or rather of impure monsters

1. The Yegyam is the sacrifice of the horse or of a goat, of whose flesh the Brahmins must eat.

2. A livre = 10 pence.

whose sole occupation is to glut upon their brutal passions. It is the same with your pretended divinities. The history of Dévindrudu is an authentic proof. The Ramayanam, which is so celebrated among you, speaks of the malediction which the penitent Gautamudu¹ fulminated against the principal god of the *swargam*. Do we not read in the fourth book of your law, the Bharatam, that Dharma Razu wished to introduce into this place of delights Yamudu metamorphosed in a dog? Hundred more stories in your books of a similar nature—do they not clearly show forth the character of your gods? Was it right to impose upon the Prince for such a large expenditure to procure for him a place in that infamous assembly?”²

“This was the last dispute the missionary had with the Brahmins. They avoided him on future occasions. For the rest nothing very particular has happened till the feast of Easter 1720, except an occasional alarm raised by the Dasaries with the object of destroying our church at Maddigubba, but by the mercy of God their plans have been frustrated.

1. This *Gautama*, who cursed Indra (chief among the minor Hindu gods) for having committed adultery with his wife Ahalya, is quite different from *Gautama Sákya*, the founder of Buddhism.

2. We curtail the rest for brevity's sake. After a few more remarks on those topics, Father le Gac endeavours to appease the anger of the Brahmins, which these references had aroused, by assuring them it was no personal animosity that made him speak thus freely. His desire that they also one day might see and embrace the truth and thus secure their salvation, was, he said, his only motive.

“When we were about to celebrate the second feast of Easter, we thought it proper to again invite the prince. At first he begged to be excused on the plea of some important business. But he bethought himself and informed the priest that he would be present, and in fact he came with a large escort of cavalry, soldiers and elephants. He was suffering from fever owing to a painful abscess which prevented him being seated. Nevertheless he assisted at all our ceremonies and then took a rest awaiting the time of the procession. We represented to him that without disturbing himself he might watch the procession from his room ; but, sick as he was, he insisted upon coming to the church.

“The procession started at about 7 o’clock in the evening accompanied by a lively band and in a blaze of torches and fireworks. Three times we went round the church reciting aloud the litanies of the H. Name of Jesus, of the B. Virgin, of the Bl. Sacrament and of St. Francis Xavier.¹

“The prince, when leaving, was still suffering from fever. But before his departure he came once more to the Church and spoke to all present with the greatest respect of the Christian religion. Then all the Christian Reddies being presented to him, he said : ‘ I am pleased that you have become the disciples of this holy Sanyasi my friend.’

1. This is the custom till this very day. One must be an Indian to appreciate the prayers thus recited amidst the din of the crowd and the deafening noise of drums.

“Day by day his sufferings increased. Finding that no remedy gave him any relief, he himself cut the abscess, which, however, appeared incurable and threw him into despair. He therefore had a tomb constructed according to his own design. Almost dying he had himself carried there to inspect the work. Many princes from the neighbourhood who visited him were struck by his fearless intrepidity in the face of his approaching death, which formed the endless subject of his conversation. A beautiful lesson for the great ones of this world, who, though Christians, will not be told that they also must die.

“In these sad circumstances the priest thought it his duty to show him all the marks possible of his gratitude and of his solicitude for his eternal welfare. He sent him by a catechist some balsam of ‘capaiba.’ ‘This,’ said the prince, ‘I do not look upon as a mercenary remedy, but as a present from a friend.’ The first application gave him such relief that the following day he despatched a cavalier with the request that the priest should come to see him. Feeling his end approaching he had left the palace and was camped out in tents outside the town on a hillock on the slope of which the mausoleum was being constructed for the reception of his last remains. This mausoleum was a vault built in brick, several steps leading into it. It had three niches, the middle one having a double door intended for the deposition of his corpse. Above the niche was a brick terrace

on which several columns were built to support a pyramid erected on the top.

“The respect and affection with which the missionary was received left nothing to be desired. After the ordinary conventionalities, the prince spoke as follows: ‘To do anything for my body that will effect a cure is out of the question. In spirit I lie already in the tomb. I have lived long enough and my sufferings for the last two years have made me tired of life. I must now fix my mind on the eternal only, which I hope to obtain by your prayers. I beg of you, therefore, to stay with me four or five days. I have made all arrangements. Knowing that you dislike the noise and grandeur of the world, a place has been prepared for you where nothing will disturb you in your holy exercises.’

“‘It is the true God alone,’ replied the priest, ‘who has given to your heart such saintly dispositions. The presentment of a happy future world is a grace given you which you must on no account reject. I wish with all my heart that God may give you back your health, and that He may give you the courage to overcome those obstacles which you know still bar the way to your eternal felicity. It will require a great deal of moral strength to surmount them.’

“The priest was then conducted to his lodgings. It was a tent large enough for fifty persons. It had been pitched on a little hillock opposite the prince’s camp.

“From what I have related one can infer the prince’s great regard for the Christian religion and its ministers. The missionary profited of these favourable dispositions to break further the bonds which held him to idolatry.¹

“The abscess was healing, the flesh appeared again sound and began to heal up. The priest wished to depart, but the prince would not hear of it. Six more days elapsed before he would permit him to return to his church.

“Scarcely four days later he despatched an express to inform the priest of the rapid progress of his health, and with renewed expressions of gratitude begged to be remembered in his prayers. That very day he went out for a walk. He intended to return to his palace ; but it had got late ; his equipage was not ready, hence the journey was postponed till the following day.

“About midnight, after the officers had retired and the sentries had taken their usual places, there was no one left in the prince’s tent except a concubine and a small boy, whose office was to fan the prince during his sleep. This unfortunate woman extinguished the lamps, approached the prince’s

1. It will be unnecessary to recount all the arguments the priest used to this end. The great obstacle, as we have already seen, was the *lingam*. Not so much as an object of worship, but, as he now once more repeated, as an emblem of his caste, which, if discarded, would bring down upon him the malediction of his family. In any case, thanks to Father le Gac’s care and attention, he recovered from his illness.

couch, and, taking his sword, struck a blow, which cut across the prince's cheek. The prince awoke with a loud cry. But the woman fearlessly returned to the charge and cut his throat. The guards, on hearing the noise, came up and found the prince in a pool of blood. Without showing the slightest fear, the woman put on a bold face and said to the officer of the guard who arrested her: 'Is this the way you keep watch? Some one has killed the prince and you shall answer for it.'

"This woman¹ was a sort of actress, who had gained the affections of the prince by her dancing. In payment of a certain sum the parents had consented to let her be taken into the palace where the prince made her wear the *lingam*. His first wife being sterile, he wedded her and had four children by her. She was literally covered from head to foot with pearls and diamonds. He had bestowed on her the title of second consort and placed implicit confidence in her. Whatever her enjoyments, she resented the restraint of the palace and was always hankering after the pleasures of her former days. The prince's illness had raised her hopes of soon regaining her liberty. But these hopes having been frustrated by the prince's recovery, the annoyance of a prolonged seclusion and the desire to lead a life without restraint led her to buy her liberty at the price of this foul deed. She was not put to death, but imprisoned for the rest of her days.

1. Her name was Vasantamma.

“The death of this prince was a severe blow to the missionary and to the new Christians. Though he was by nature overbearing and irritable, he always listened with pleasure and docility to the truth. Some even thought that he had embraced the Christian religion. They had observed a great change in his character from the time he had heard of the true God and His just laws. He did no more visit trivial faults with that rigour and severity which characterised his judgments in the past.

“We feared that the loss of so good a prince would be fatal to our cause and that the Brahmins and the Dasaries would take advantage of the occasion to raise a new storm. The former had always been looked upon as the oracles of the people and now began to feel that their credit and influence was on the wane. The latter were losing disciples, which greatly affected their income.

“But the marks of goodwill, which his brother and successor has already shown towards us, has entirely dissipated our fear. On his return from the Cuddapah-Nabob’s army, he passed near Krishnapuram, and knowing that we had a church in that place, he enquired if the Roman *sanyasi* was there. The pagans, objecting to an outside prince entering their town,¹ deceived him by saying that the *sanyasi* had gone to Ballapuram. The priest, hearing of this, went up the next day to greet the prince, who had halted at one of the fortresses in the neighbourhood.

1. Peuplade.

He was very sensible of this mark of respect on the part of the priest, and assured him that the Christians could depend on his favour as they had done on his brother's. A month later, hearing that the Father had returned to Maddigubba, he came to see him with his whole court, and on that occasion promised to establish and maintain a band of musicians¹ for the church and to have a grand processional car made for the statues of Our Lord and the B. Virgin ; which promise he has duly carried out.

"A few days after this visit he sent a message to beg of the *sanyasi* to come to his palace. The priest repaired at once to Anantapur, where lodgings had been prepared for him. The following morning, hearing that the prince was on his way to pay him a visit, he went out to meet him. The prince immediately dismounted from his horse, and touching the ground with his hands and then raising them above his head, made a profound reverence. After the usual civilities he begged the priest to accompany him to the palace, where he was at once taken into the princess's apartments.

"A continuous fever and dysentery, a contraction of the nerves and frequent vomiting, had brought this lady to the verge of death. 'You see,' said the prince, 'my affliction. We have tried all remedies without success. My hope now is in your prayers. I know you do not call yourself a physician, but I also know

1. Un symphonie.

that you rescued my brother from the very grip of death, and that, were it not for that unfortunate tragedy, he would now be enjoying perfect health. Will you not render me the same kind services?" The missionary administered a dose of theriac and gave her some cordial lozenges which he blessed with the sign of the cross. God willed that the prince's good faith should not be disappointed. In a short while the princess was perfectly cured.

"He shows us in return such marks of gratitude that we have all hopes that he also, like his brother, will be to us a powerful protector against the deceit and artifices of our enemies.

"I have the honour to be, etc..."

We have again to step over a large void of eight years. To fill up this gap we insert a letter from Father Caron written during that period. From the context we would conclude that it was written from Krishnapuram. Though it gives us no particulars as to the newly converted Reddies, whose history will be taken up later on, it contains nevertheless some highly interesting facts, as seen from the point of view of one who was comparatively new in the field.

Father Francis Caron died a martyr of charity of some contagious disease, as the editor of the *Lett. Ed. et Cur.* states in a footnote, probably soon after writing this letter, and lies buried at Krishnapuram. One of the three tumbled-down monuments, which the

natives still venerate, is pointed out as his, Shevrinadha Swamulavaru, namely the one to the west.¹

Letter of Father Caron of the Company of Jesus to the Ursuline Nuns :—

IN THE MISSION OF THE CARNATIC,
20th Nov. 1720.²

“The peace of Jesus Christ !

“The distance which separates us has not effaced from my memory the request you so earnestly made when I bade you my last farewell. I shall endeavour to satisfy you by briefly entertaining you on the manners and customs of these distant nations, and dwell somewhat longer on what regards the holy ministry to which Providence has called me.

“The Hindu religion is a most monstrous compound of all sorts of fables. According to their books, they admit not less than thirty million gods. The three principal ones of this pantheon are invested with different functions. To one they attribute the creation of the world, to another its conservation, and to the third the power of destroying it. These three are independent of each other. Each one has his own paradise. They have often quarrelled; one actually cut off the other’s head. They have several times appeared on the earth under different forms such as that of a fish, of a pig, and so forth.

1. The two others are that of Divianatha (Father Ducros) to the east, and that of Sanjivinadha (Father le Gac) in the middle, which is still held as the most sacred of the three.

2. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, VII. 385.

Whatever they applied to their personal use whilst in this world, is thereby deified. So, for instance, you see almost in every temple the statue of a bull, because one of these gods rode that animal. But what among all these fables surprised me most, is that they have a god called Krishna born at midnight in a shepherd's hut. The people observe a fast on the eve of his feast, which they celebrate with great noise. The life of this god is a tissue of infamous actions. The solemnity of this feast consists entirely in an uproarious revelry ; piety or devotion manifesting itself in drinking, eating, clamorous singing and merry-making.

"Their temples are not intended for people to assemble in. They are the true abodes of demons. They admit of no light except through a narrow door,—at least those I have seen. If people wish to perform some particular devotion to their gods, they send their offerings, such as flowers, incense, rice and vegetables,¹ to be sacrificed by the *guru* ; at which performance nobody assists. Permit me to relate a sacrifice or offering thus made, at which I accidentally was present.

"On one of my journeys last month I took shelter towards evening in a temple, intending to pass the night there peacefully. The *guru* was just in the act of presenting to the idols the offerings brought him. I could not let the opportunity pass by without

1. Ghee (clarified butter) is a favourite offering, with the temple *guru*.

trying to make him understand how wrong it was to worship these insensible gods. I spoke to him of the true God, and it appeared that my words made some impression on him. He seemed quite agreed as to the truth of my statements. But, evading the subject and speaking in a friendly tone, he suddenly adverted to the inadvisability of my staying there for the night. Thieves might come to molest me. It is safer, he said, to go into the neighbouring village. Seeing, however, that I did not heed his good counsel and had no intention to move, he rid himself of my unwelcome presence by raising such a volume of smoke that I was obliged to seek the door. From that place of vantage, however, I managed to watch the proceedings. In a corner he was cooking the food for the gods. Several pots of water were poured over the idols, which he rubbed and scrubbed for a long time, evidently dragging on the ceremony that I might leave. He then put some fire in a broken potsherd, burnt incense, and presented it to the nose of each idol mumbling some words, which conveyed no meaning to me. This over, he placed the cooked rice and vegetables on the plate, made of seven or eight leaves sewn together, walked round the idols making several reverences to them, as if to invite them to his repast, and then sat quietly down to eat, consuming with the greatest relish the offerings prepared for the gods.

“The princes of this country are nearly all of them very superstitious. To give a feast to their

idols costs them sometimes enormous sums. They often undertake long journeys with heaps of money as an offering to one of their favourite gods. These treasures fall invariably into the hands of the Moors who are the masters of the country.

"The prince of Ballapuram, in which town we have a church, is constantly having one of his gods carried round in a palanquin preceded by a horse and an elephant, richly caparisoned. Both these animals have been given by him to that god. The noise of numerous instruments attracts crowds of people who worship the idol as it passes along. At intervals a halt is made and silence is imposed to recite aloud the praises of the deity.

"Last year the then reigning princess fell very ill. Her husband had recourse to all his gods, offerings being made to them for her recovery. To propitiate them further, he had the image of his principal god branded on her shoulders with a red-hot iron. The poor woman's sufferings were thereby increased, and she died after this cruel ordeal. The death of his consort threw the rajah into a rage against his gods and he forbade all feasts in their honor.¹ Lately, however his wrath appears to have cooled down. Last month he inaugurated a festival surpassing in outward display all previous ones.

1. This is but a typical example of the Hindu's character. The gods must accede to his requests. If they do not, he takes his revenge. But the curious part of it is that this revengeful disposition is not directed against this or that particular deity whose

"These people are divided into castes or tribes like the Jews of old, with whom they seem to have had intercourse in the dim past. In their customs, in their ceremonies, in their sacrifices, many remnants of the old law may be discovered, disfigured, however, by a number of fabulous additions of their own. This distinction of caste is a great obstacle to the progress of the Gospel, especially in places where we have but few or no Christians. One cannot marry outside his caste, nor even outside his own kin or parentage. A pagan, therefore, desirous though he be of entering the fold, will often confront us with this argument: 'If I become a Christian, I must tear myself away from all that is near and dear to me. There are so far no Christians among my relatives. I shall be like an out-cast and my people will disown me.' Thus an act of

aid he had implored, but directly against Almighty God, which clearly demonstrates the inborn instinct of the human heart that there is but one Being who rules supreme. Evidence of this is daily forthcoming to those who move among them. The ordinary Hindu never prays to God as the source of all good, but seeks the propitiation of the gods of his own making. He blasphemes, however, against the Creator when the favour is not granted. A pagan family was living close to the quarters of the writer of these notes. The husband having fallen seriously ill, the wife faithfully made daily *pūja* to the idol in the temple close by. One morning a fearful crying and howling made the writer of these notes come out to see what could be the cause. The man had died and here was the woman blaspheming God throwing hands full of dust up to the sky uttering in her despair "*Papisti devudu*"! This is too awful for words. The English *beastly* or *nasty* God would fairly render its blasphemous meaning. Why did she not throw the dust on the idol in whom she apparently had placed her hopes?

the most heroic kind is required of these people from the very start to embrace a religion against which they are already prejudiced by a thousand superstitious notions. The Lord, however, in His infinite mercy knows how to soften down these difficulties.

“There is a class of people who wear the *lingam* (that is to say, an emblem which they carry round their necks to denote their attachment to one of their gods) ¹. They keep this with the greatest care, making their daily *puja* to it. Their gurus have persuaded them that if it be lost nothing short of death can expiate such a crime.

“I read in a Hindu book the following story : a Lingaite having lost his lingam, accused himself of his fault to his guru. The latter declared that he must make up his mind to die. Death alone would appease the anger of the god, and so saying, he conducted him to a tank. The Lingaite seemingly behaved as being resigned to his fate. He begged the guru to let him have his lingam for a moment, so that he might make his last *puja* to his favoured god. The guru handed it to him. But the cunning man immediately dropped it into the the tank. Now then, said he, we are both without lingam, there is no escape but both must die, and so saying, he dragged the unfortunate guru farther into the tank. ‘Wait, my son,’ said the guru, ‘be not so hasty, I shall dispense

1. Father Caron could not possibly state the nature of this emblem in a letter of this kind.

you from the punishment you have incurred and repair your fault by giving you another lingam.'

"There is a custom among the farmer caste here of a very curious sort. When they get their ears pierced, or at the time of their marriage, they are obliged to have two fingers of their hand cut as an offering to the idol. They walk that day as in triumph to the temple and have two fingers chopped off with a chisel in front of the idol. Fire is applied at once to the wounded stumps to stop the bleeding. One can obtain a dispensation from this ceremony by offering two golden fingers instead.¹

"Another custom prevails of cutting the nose of the enemy who falls into their hands. The Rajah rewards his men according to the number of noses they bring him, which he has then strung up together and suspended in front of one of their goddesses.

"In France malefactors are branded with the flower de lis (*fleur de lis*) to their eternal shame. Here people pay for the honour of getting their backs burnt. These unfortunate slaves of Satan present themselves in crowds to the guru, who always keeps an iron red-hot for this soul-saving ceremony. But payment first: without it no prayers or tears will induce him to grant the favour demanded. The correct amount having been disbursed, the guru quietly imprints on their shoulders the image of their gods. The poor deluded people go through this ordeal with-

1. See page 113.

out showing a sign of the pain they are enduring. From this you can understand to what extent the devil makes his votaries obey.

“The government of these people is just as odd as their religion. The will of the prince and the power of the strong stand for justice in whatever circumstance. People live in a sort of perpetual servitude. They possess no lands of their own. All lands belong to the prince whose subjects cultivate them. It is a special crime to possess money. Those who have any hide it carefully under the ground lest it be taken from them under a thousand and one pretexts.

“The princes cannot help vexing their subjects, because the Moors, who have subjugated India, impose exorbitant taxes which they are obliged to pay at the risk of seeing their territory given over to plunder. The greatest crimes go unpunished. Provided money is paid, immunity is assured. A man who had killed his wife and daughter was merely banished from the province. A woman, who killed her husband, was publicly covered over with mud, and this was the only punishment she received. A thief who had stolen the jewels of the Ballapuram rajah, was let off with a few strokes of the rattan. A few days afterwards he was caught at the same game. Instead of imparting a condign punishment, he was merely watched lest he should leave the territory, as they wished to keep so useful a man, who, when occasion arises, might render important service to the state. This service consists

in this : The town being threatened with a siege, the enemy's plans could be averted by a skilful rogue getting hold of their treasury.

“In Europe the thrones are occupied by the noblest families. Of all the princes in the Carnatic I do not know one who is of high caste ; some are even of very inferior caste. Hence it happens that the servants of some of these princes would consider themselves degraded if they had to take their meals with their masters. Their own fellow-castemen would refuse to receive them. In this country cooking one's own food is looked upon as a very noble thing to do. I am sometimes asked if I prepare my own meals. Instead of an insult, this is the highest compliment they can pay me. They consider no person worthy enough of performing this office for me.

“One is very much to be pitied when he falls sick in this country. There are everywhere crowds of so-called doctors, but they are mere ignorant quacks, who gather their experience at the expense and risk of their patients. The few simple remedies and drugs known to them are found in the forests. In cases of fever, even should it last thirty days, nothing is allowed the patient except a little warm water. Their maxim is that the evil must be expelled by weakening nature. Should the patient die, it is not want of nourishment but the force of the evil. I was at first very much opposed to this treatment, but having seen three or four of our catechists die for having taken

nourishment after fifteen or sixteen days' abstinence, I changed my opinion. I can, in fact, bear witness to the following astonishing cure. A high-caste boy, 15 years of age, fell ill; nothing but warm water was given him. The fever left him on the 27th day. As he had still a little strength left, they waited three more days before allowing him any nourishment lest the fever might return. The thirtieth day they gave him a little plain rice *conjee*, and this diet was continued for the next five or six days. The lad was restored to perfect health, and is at present under instruction for baptism.

"There are in this country no academies or schools for the study of the sciences. They have some knowledge of astronomy and predict eclipses fairly accurately. Although this country has been subject to frequent revolutions and changes well worthy of being transmitted to posterity, one finds nothing recorded in their books but stories and fables.

"Thus far I have given you, dear sisters, a summary of the religion and government of the people in the Carnatic. You will, no doubt, be anxious to have some particulars regarding myself and the blessings which our Lord showers upon this nascent mission. I proceed at once to comply with your wish. I entered the Carnatic on the 20th March 1719. Three weeks after my arrival, on Holy Saturday night, information was brought that the priest, who was stationed 12 miles distant, had fallen ill and would be unable to say Easter Sunday Mass. I started at

once for his place, where I arrived at three in the morning. The Christians who had come from far and near (*dont toute la campagne était couverte*), were keeping watch, because shortly before robbers had broken into the church. It being still dark when we arrived, they mistook us for thieves, and, arming themselves with sticks, they began pelting us with stones. Fortunately, they recognised us in time, otherwise we would have been severely handled. I baptized that day 28 persons. At 10 o'clock in the evening, the whole crowd assembled on a large open piece of ground. A beautifully decorated car with a statue of Our Lady was brought out and carried in procession. Three hundred torches dispelled the darkness of the night, and fireworks without end kept the scene in a continual blaze. Besides the Christians, a great number of pagans took part in it. They were edified and well pleased. This ceremony lasted from ten at night till three in the morning. External manifestations of this kind are calculated to inspire the heathens with high sentiments for our holy mysteries.

“ You would hardly believe with what a lively faith and piety these new Christians approach the Sacraments. No sooner has the missionary arrived in one of the stations, than from every direction they all come flocking in to be present at the holy mysteries. Some come from a good distance. Starting early in the morning, they walk all day through the heat of the sun, having partaken of a little cold rice in the morning. On arrival in the evening, they refresh

themselves with a drink of cold water, and passing the night on the bare floor, rise early in the morning to assist at Mass. When accusing themselves of the smallest fault they shed tears. At night-prayers, during the recitation of the act of contrition, they strike their breasts and sobbing aloud give vent to their sorrow.

“On solemn feast-days the wealthier Christians put aside some money to feed the poorer Christians. This spirit of union and charity is a great source of edification to the pagans. Baptism is generally administered on these feast-days. Our catechists bring to us poor idolaters in crowds ; for, once they know the true God, they are happy to throw off the yoke of Satan who has held them so long captive.

“I am sometimes struck with the miraculous grace bestowed upon old people. Their inveterate prejudice in favour of their deities is almost insurmountable, and still, when once decided to become Christians, they receive baptism without the least doubt or hesitation regarding the doctrine or mysteries of our holy faith.

“Converts have frequently to undergo the severest trials at the hands of their heathen relatives, who ill-treat them and, driving them away from their homes, refuse to have any communication with them. How often do not these sturdy neophytes tell us : ‘ Father, I suffer very much ; but I am content and happy in submitting to the will of God. Heaven will be the

reward for my trials.' I have seen several of those brave Christians, who, when they firmly refused to give their daughters in marriage to the heathens, were treated most disgracefully. Some actually died of sheer misery and want. And how many were not driven away from their lands and homes for no other crime than that of adoring the true God! They have sustained these persecutions with a firmness, a faith and a courage worthy of the first heroes of the Church. They were seen leaving their employments, their homes, their parents and friends without complaint or murmur, carrying their little ones in their arms to strange and unknown countries, with no other resource but a firm faith in Providence. Examples of such heroic virtue, as manifested by a newly converted people, console us in our efforts, and compensate us largely for the hardships and sacrifices we make to bring them into the way of salvation.

"On Christmas last¹ it pleased God to glorify His name in the territory² of a prince where the Gospel had not yet penetrated. There were there seven persons cruelly tormented by the devil during four months. Two of them died in that state. There being no other resource left them but the true God, the remaining five were brought to the church of Krishnapuram, their legs chained and their hands tied behind their backs. Immediately on their arrival, I despatched

1. 1719.

2. How one could wish to have the name at least of the territory. From the context it would seem to be at no great distance from Krishnapuram.

a catechist to their village with orders to remove from their houses and those of their parents, all idols and superstitious objects he might find. The following day after Mass I began the exorcism. The church was fully lit up for the great feast. The novelty of the spectacle had attracted a large crowd of pagans as well as Christians. God rewarded the faith of these poor slaves of Satan. At the end of the exorcism they became calm, and one could see they were freed from their cruel servitude. I ordered the irons to be taken off. Everyone, especially their kinsfolk, were amazed at the quiet and composed behaviour of these men whose fury they had been unable to control. The prince who knew of their obsession, was not the least surprised. One of them was in fact one of his domestics whom he had himself ordered to be chained up. A messenger came to inform me that the prince was anxious to make my acquaintance. He came in fact on that very Christmas day at four in the afternoon. He is an old man of about 65 years. I naturally argued, from the undeniable fact of the delivery of these possessed, as to the truth of the doctrine I had travelled six thousand leagues to announce. He and his suite agreed that a God so powerful must be the true God. After an interview of half-an-hour he withdrew and sent word that he wished to speak to me privately. For more than an hour he listened to the reading of the principal proofs of our holy religion. He assented to all unreservedly, and from time to time he would loudly exclaim 'Here is the truth!'

“The church was tastefully decorated. When the bell rang for evening prayers and the people had collected, the prince also assisted, very much struck at the piety and reverence of the Christians. After prayers he ordered his followers to remain in the church and came alone to see me. For a quarter of an hour I spoke to him of the true God, of heaven, of hell, of the false deities he adored. He was quite convinced of what I said and wished there and then to be admitted as a disciple. He then took leave, offering me the highest mark of respect, raising his folded hands above his head. The following day I sent him a catechist with books explanatory of our mysteries. He had them read to him for some days without, however, declaring his mind, and so far has not shown any sign of his intentions of realising the hopes raised in us on Christmas day.

“This prince has among his courtiers a great many Brahmins. Holding, as they do, at all the native courts in India, the highest posts, they thwart us a great deal. I learnt they had persuaded the prince that, being strong in the magic art, I had delivered the five possessed persons by some of my incantations. The prince is very superstitious in that respect. In fact, he keeps a paid magician at his court to avert the spell an evil-disposed man might put on him. I invited this magician to come and see me, telling him that I was most anxious to reveal my secrets and compare them with his. He promised to come, but has not kept his word.

“Six or seven days after his visit I sent the prince some raisins under sealed cover. This fruit is very rare out here. The Brahmins, however, warned him not to touch them. ‘These seals,’ they said, ‘contain some spell; if you touch them, some evil will befall you.’ Some days afterwards, a catechist, whom I had sent on a conventional visit, was asked by the prince to open the basket. ‘I did not wish,’ said he, ‘to do so myself out of respect for the priest.’ He relished the raisins, and the Brahmins were somewhat disconcerted at the prince’s witty ruse.

“When on another occasion I sent a catechist on a friendly errand to another prince, I instructed him to go into his presence with a book under his arm. My object was obtained. The inquisitive prince wished to know what the book contained. Being told it treated of God and our duties towards Him, he had it read to him till far in the night. A Brahmin astrologer, vexed at the prince’s eagerness to listen to this instructive reading, came up to him with his book on astrology in his hands. ‘Prince,’ said he, ‘according to the present course of the stars, it is inadvisable to remain here; you must retire at once for the night.’ What was the superstitious man to do but obey?

“In the second week of Lent,¹ just after my retreat, I experienced a little adventure. A crowd of Moors turned up, intent, under some pretext or other, on taking me away from Krishnapuram. From the

1. 1720.

early morning they loitered about the place saying they wished to speak to me. For some time, however, they were kept at a distance, the Christians telling them I was at prayer and could not be disturbed. But they became more bold, entered the house, and kept going and coming, without, however, disclosing their object. They were headed by two Brahmins, who, I believe, were the authors of this mysterious plot. Fearing at last that the Christians would take my part, they addressed themselves to a prince, who was tributary to the Moorish commander of this detachment, and begged of him to send the garrison of his fortress to keep my disciples in check. The prince, who was friendly disposed towards me, replied that he could be no party to any act of hostility in the territory of a neighbouring prince with whom he was on friendly terms. Whereupon the Moors resolved, as I learned the next day, to carry me off in the darkness of the night. I do not know how the commander of the Krishnapuram fortress became aware of their plans; but he came to see me at half past five in the evening and counselled me to take shelter in the fortress, as the Moors, who seemed to have sinister intentions, had already stationed themselves at all exits and approaches to my house. Following his advice, I unobservedly slipped away through a back door and passed the night in the fortress. The Moors, finding I had left the house, withdrew to their camp. At eight o'clock that evening a message was sent me inviting me to their camp,

the commander being very anxious to make my acquaintance. I declined the invitation on the ostensible plea that it did not behove a sanyasi like me to mix with the great ones of this world. The next day they broke up the camp and I returned to my church. I am entirely ignorant of their design or what they would have done to me if I had fallen into their hands. The Brahmins, exciting the Moors' passion for money by telling them that we understand the secret of making gold, have played us many an ugly trick. Under these false pretexts many a Hindu, whom the Brahmins are bent on injuring, is thus most cruelly ill-treated. Only recently, two of our missionaries were in this manner kept two years in a loathsome prison and twice put to the torture.

* * * * *

[Here he relates the conversion of a few adults whose piety he greatly admires.]

* * * * *

"Sometimes we are witness to a marked and manifest providence of God over His elect. Not long ago a pagan from a very distant village, having come to Krishnapuram on some business, fell ill. The Christians, observing his precarious state, spoke to him of the true God and eternal life. The man sent for me; I instructed him as well as circumstances would allow, baptized him, and had the consolation of seeing him die the next day a most edifying death. There were four more adults receiving the same grace about the same time as the above.

Among them was a Brahmin who would undoubtedly have died a pagan had he remained among his people. The conversion of a Brahmin is a true miracle of grace. The obstacles in their way are almost insurmountable. This Brahmin was over 65 years of age. He was an inhabitant of Devandapalle, and, what is quite exceptional among his class, was always very friendly with the priest. In fact he had been instrumental in obtaining for us a piece of ground to build our church at Devandapalle. It is clear God willed to reward him for his charitable dispositions towards us. He had made a journey of 90 miles, and arrived at a place where we have a church and where I just happened to be at the time. He fell sick. At two in the night he sent to me for some medicine. Taking with me some *eau de melisse*, I visited him. I saw that his condition was very serious indeed. He wished to be baptized. His intercourse with the priest had made him sufficiently conversant with the principal mysteries of our holy religion. An hour after I had poured the saving waters of baptism over him, he expired.

“Such visible and not infrequent miracles of God’s mercy compensate us, in a large measure, for the crosses and trials which befall us, and for the perpetual life of penance we have to lead. Our life no doubt, is a very austere one: poor and scanty food, fatiguing journeys, and over and above this, the persecutions and dangers we are incessantly exposed to. I believe you already know that all the nourishment

we can partake of consists in rice and vegetables ; to quench our thirst we have but plain water. This austere mode of life is absolutely necessary in this country. Without it, it would be impossible to establish the faith. The higher castes live exclusively on rice and vegetables. They despise those who eat any other food. Consider, besides, that the pagan penitents—for even the devil has his martyrs—practise this austere manner of life. We have here a Christian who was formerly in the service of one of these penitents. He tells us that the said penitent took one meal at noon consisting of merely rice and vegetables, and in the evening was satisfied with a drink of water. The rest of the day he spent in reciting the praises of his false gods. If our lives were less austere, the missionary and the religion he preaches would be despised.

“Our journeys, too, are painful and toilsome. There is no shelter along the way. I always pass the night under a tree exposed to wind and rain. Sometimes I take refuge in a heathen temple, if I find one on my path, but, as a rule, one is molested by all sorts of insects that abound in such places. Whilst the Christians who accompany me prepare my rice, I recite my office, and then after a few hours’ rest, more or less of a disturbed kind, I continue my journey. I scarcely undertake any in which my face, hands and feet are not all blistered, while burning with thirst for want of a drop of water. By a special protection of Providence we encounter few mishaps on these journeys. Observe

that, besides the hordes of thieves in which this country abounds, we have enemies everywhere who exactly know the tracks we follow and who might easily kill us in the night.

“This is, dear sisters, the narrative, true in all its details, of my experiences during the sixteen months I have had the privilege to work in this mission. I rely on your goodwill to help me with your prayers.

I am, etc.

*Note.*¹—Father Caron finished his apostolic course almost as soon as he commenced it. He died a victim to his zeal and charity. Having been informed that a whole family of pagans, who were suffering from a contagious disease, had been driven from the village and were putting up in the fields destitute of all help, he fearlessly went to their assistance. Touched by the tender care bestowed on them by the priest, they asked to be instructed. Father Caron had the satisfaction of baptizing nearly every one of them and died—he and his catechist—of the disease contracted whilst ministering unto them.²

1. Footnote of the Editor of the *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*

2. He lies buried at Krishnapuram. We may take it for granted that the contagious disease was the virulent cholera which even now is very prevalent there. During 1908 fifty people died at Krishnapuram of this disease; the village containing in all about a thousand inhabitants.

CHAPTER IV.

With the last letter of Father Le Gac the interesting account of the conversion of the Reddies and its subsequent progress came to a somewhat abrupt end. We do not again get a glimpse of them until some years after in Father Calmette's letters which are now to follow.

As remarked before, the *Lett. Edif. et Cur.* are merely a miscellaneous collection of epistolary correspondence selected from among the letters of some of the Jesuit Missionaries in different parts of the East. A continuous and uninterrupted narrative is therefore beyond hope of realisation. Unfortunately, the archives of the French Jesuits were well nigh entirely destroyed at the time of the suppression. Otherwise, unpublished letters might still be found to fill up the gap of different periods.

Father Calmette's letters are the last of those of the Carnatic Missionaries whose letters appear in the series. They are, most of them, exceedingly long, but because of their intense interest it was thought advisable to give them as far as possible in their entirety, omitting only those portions which have no direct bearing on the Telugu Missions or subjects already touched upon by his predecessors, and condensing a few passages, which in their original form may for the present purpose be considered a little too diffusive.

It should be observed that Fr. Calmette, like Fr. Le Gac, invariably avoids the personal pronoun *I*, and speaks of himself as *the Missionary* in the third person.

It may be interesting to note, as a preliminary introduction to his letters, that it was most probably under Fr. Calmette's administration that the Reddies emigrated from Maddiguba and Alumuru, and returned to the land whence their forefathers had come, the Dupad' sima, spreading thence further south into the Venkatigiri Rajah's territory.¹ To judge from his letters Fr. Calmette seems to have been a very erudite Jesuit. Mgr. Bonand mentions it as a tradition of his time that Fr. Calmette was the Venkatigiri² Rajah's librarian. We see in the letter which follows that the King of France had appointed the French Jesuits to collect books and manuscripts for his newly erected oriental library. Fr. Calmette's indefatigable search for such manuscripts on behalf of his *own Rajah*, the King of France, may have given rise to this somewhat distorted tradition, the Venkatigiri Rajah being only one of the numberless petty Rajahs or Poligars, who each held a small territory, over which nevertheless they seem to have had absolute sway, provided they paid their tribute to the Mahomedan rulers.

Fr. Calmette's name³ lived on, as we shall notice in its proper place, for many generations among the

1. Now called the Nellore Dt.

2. Venkatigiri of the North Arcot Dt.

3. His Christian name, we learn, was Jean (= John).

Telugu Christians. In Bishop Bonand's time,¹ just a hundred years later, the Reddies of the Nellore and Kistna Districts speak of him as the great Sanskrit scholar who had followed them across the Cambam hills.

With reference to Father Calmette's reflections on caste prejudice, it is well that we should bear in mind that caste has always been the great obstacle in the way. The Jesuits, who sacrificed everything for the Hindu's sake and, making themselves all to all, observed caste in the strictest sense, found this the great stumbling block ; a sign that it is our origin or race-hatred which has been, and always will be, the reason for the proud Hindu's unapproachableness. The present unrest illustrates this in no uncertain manner. Talk of Europeans not associating with Hindus ! Let the latter break down this most objectionable barrier and matters will right themselves. Will this ever be done ? Most improbably. The Brahmin who stands at the head of this inveterate system will never allow a levelling process. And this applies not merely to the ordinary country-brahmin, but even with more force to many of the educated of that class, who, to the pride of their caste, add the overbearing arrogance of their Western education. It is true that, with unbounded zeal and with millions upon millions of money spent by the Protestant sects, some material good is being done for the lowest classes. Here and there one of them is slowly rising to a position. But how will this affect

1. See Bishop Bonand's diary.

the country at large ? The influential petty Rajahs or Poligars, who, before the advent of the English, ruled like kings in their own little kingdoms, were nearly all of menial caste, such as boyas, potters, and so forth. Did that alter or improve the status of the people ? The Brahmin, under a regime of this kind, exercised his power and influence with all the more effect.

The public will watch with interest the movement just now being set on foot by the different Protestant sects, who are making an effort to concentrate all their hitherto heterogeneous forces into one general union for the establishment of a national Indian church. This federation is to take its stand on the basis of "*a short and simple creed adapted to the needs of the country.*" This may be taken to mean that these forces are to be brought together not only for religious, but also, and primarily, for material and social ends. Time alone can show with what result.

But let us for the present try to realise the somewhat chimerical idea that some day India will obtain what she is clamouring for—Swaraj. What will become of this handful of educated Panchamas ? One fears they will probably be in a worse plight than their brethren who stuck to their shovel and basket. So much for the optimistic hope that this obnoxious caste system will in course of time break up. Is there ever so much as a practical suggestion discussed in Congress meetings for the inauguration of this primary desideratum ? Congress-wallahs have a rich vocabulary with which to build up their castles ; but the

origin of all social and national evil they do not touch. Poor fellows ! one is inclined to exclaim, first remove the old foundations on which no house, much less an empire, can stand, and after that you can begin by slowly laying solid layers of social improvements. In this, and in this alone, lies the hope of the regeneration of India and of her ever becoming a nation at all.

.....

His first letter is written :

To the Marquis of Coetlogon Vice Admiral of France.

Dated BALLAPURAM IN THE CARNATIC,

28th September 1730.¹

“The vast ocean, which separates us from France and takes six weary months to traverse, has made me feel the estrangement from my country less than the customs and habits of this nation have impressed upon me the idea of being a stranger in the land with ever increasing force. Hence it does not surprise me in the least that the first European travellers should have called India the new world ; for in very truth, everything here is new—country, climate, seasons, customs, the colour of the people, laws, religion, in fact, everything which can possibly differentiate nations separated from their common origin for four thousand years. We also in our turn are a new world to the Indians, and this, all the more so by reason of their ignorance of any other country but their

1. *Lett. Ed. et C.*, VII, p. 473.

own. Their knowledge of geography in an easterly direction does not extend even so far as China. From north to south it does not reach beyond the Caucasus and the isle of Ceylon, and as to the west it is just as limited. Hence, they are extremely surprised to see people not born in any of the 56 "countries,"¹ beyond which they have no idea that inhabited lands exist. Owing to this ignorance, they consider the India in which they live, whose talent has been extolled and of whose heroes alone they have heard, as the queen of countries. Their caste being of divine origin, other people are merely barbarians. The Moors, who are their masters, have, after several centuries, not made the slightest impression, nor raised them one jot above the low level in which they found them. Good manners, bravery, arts, the scientific attainments of the European—none of these things can impress them with the least idea of superiority over that which even inferior caste is in their estimation. Every nation is inclined to consider itself superior to other nations. But, with us, common sense moderates presumption and commerce makes for equality. Here there is no such equalising principle. There is no nobility but theirs; no manners, no knowledge, no learning like theirs. It is true that along the coast intercourse has somewhat softened their pride, but, in the interior, even our colour will hardly save us from reproach. When the Christians suffer at the hands of the heathens, it is often

1. They divided India into 56 countries.

less because of the religion they have embraced than because that religion is ours. If hatred of the truth, which discredits their errors and degrades their gods, is the motive of persecution, as is generally the case, the new obligations which the neophytes have accepted to fulfil are nearly always made the pretext. It is on this principal grievance, which we may call zeal of caste, as much as on the jealous safeguarding of their idolatrous cult, that the Christians are banished from their homes, deprived of the means of sustenance, and, what is perhaps the most dangerous trial of all, that of being declared fallen from caste. So that, we can truly say with St. Paul: "Tamquam purgamenta hujus mundi facti sumus."

"*Prangi* is the name the Indians first applied to the Portuguese and all Europeans after them. Some derive this name from *para-angi*, which, in the language of the country, would mean *strange dress* or *tunic*. But it seems more probable that the word *Frangi*, which the Indians, for want of the letter *F* in their alphabet, pronounce *Prangi*, has been introduced by the Moors. At Constantinople Europeans are called *Frangi*."

The Dasaries, of which sect we hear so little now, were then all-powerful, as we have seen before. They, with the Brahmins at the different courts, placed all kinds of obstacles in the priest's way. Any pretext easily succeeded with the timid, but, apparently, otherwise well-disposed, Rajahs or Poligars. They made the

Rajah of Ballapuram believe, says Fr. Calmette, that the missionary's intention and object was to build a fortress under the plea of erecting a church for which he had given sanction, and that this would prove fatal to his own interests. He therefore issued an order that the superstructural walls in stone masonry were not to exceed a yard in height, the remaining portion to be built in mud. The little turrets on the roof for the erection of a cross had to be pulled down to appease the anger of the Dasaries.

He describes a severe persecution which took place in his time. The Dasaries had forced the Rajah of Ballapuram to expel the Christians by issuing an edict against them, whereby they were declared to be deprived of their caste, forbidding all artisans to work for their benefit or to supply their wants. Famine was desolating the country. What did this mean but condemning the Christians to a life of misery or death? Is it to be wondered at that some of the weaker ones denied their faith?

"A little knowledge," Fr. Calmette continues, "of India and the Asiatic spirit makes it as easy to understand how under such pressure apostasy takes place as that Israel should deck itself with flowers on the feast of Bacchus under the persecution of the Persian Kings. Jerusalem opposed the Machabees in the torrent of seduction. I hardly dare compare our Christians with them, because there was no question of having to shed their blood, but, nevertheless, here also God had His chosen souls."

Here follow a few heroic examples of fortitude under most trying circumstances. "Many," he says, "sought work under neighbouring Rajahs. The remainder, with the exception of the few who fell, are now dispersed over different countries; God permitting that in this way the truth of His doctrine and the glory of His name should be spread in places where He is not known. As for those who proved weak, one may say that with most of them it was rather the fear of appearing to be Christians, than the intention of forsaking their religion. Such was the case particularly with most of the women who cannot be convicted of having assumed any heathen marks. The men painted their foreheads with white-earth and vermillion, as nearly all do, who are in the Rajah's employ. But as these marks are not altogether free from a superstitious meaning, we do not permit our Christians to wear them.

"With this exception they have not fallen into any crime of idolatry, and the promptitude of their repentance showed that they did not commit even this fault without remorse. But perhaps it would be better not to speak of those weak-minded neophytes who, because in time of temptation they blushed of the Gospel, do not deserve any excuse."

Calm being once more restored, an epidemic broke out, which the heathens looked upon as a just retribution and punishment.

“The general drought lasted three years, and several events which followed in the wake of this persecution seemed to show that the heavens were wroth with indignation. A Brahmin, who had been one of our bitterest enemies, died and was eaten by the dogs, which is the last degree of infamy for that caste, who burn their dead. The Rajah’s *guru* lost many of his household. A Christian, who had been catechist, and whose loose morals had been the cause of his apostasy, was dabbling in sorcery. The head of a village who was tormented by the devil, which he attributed to a spell, begged of him to set him free. He promised to do so, and for this end betook himself with the whole of his family to the village of the possessed man. He succeeded in fact in expelling the devil, but the latter went out from the possessed into the body of the exorcist. ‘I have expelled him,’ he cried in despair, ‘but at the cost of my own life!’ He then lost consciousness, and remaining in that state, he expired the third day. Notwithstanding the horror the Indians have, more than any other nation, of leaving a corpse in the village, the people were so frightened that no one had the courage to approach, so that it remained two days unburied. At last, the two women, who were the companions of his evil ways, were obliged themselves to carry away his remains. The following day the body was found disinterred, the flesh torn to shreds and the limbs thrown hither and thither.

“Carveypondy¹ is the first church which the founders of the Carnatic Mission have erected. Although subject to the Nabob, the town belongs to the Brahmins, and is on that account more than any other exposed to persecution. For these thirty years they have never ceased to harass the missionary. Although they have sometimes been punished by the Moors, who are masters of this country, they always remain the avowed ministers of Satan, never for once losing sight of their object to ruin the Church and frustrate the spread of religion. Nothing in this country is so opposed to Christianity as the Brahminical caste. It is they who seduce India and inspire the people with hatred of the Christian name.”²

Father Calmette mentions the name of a Mr. Pereyra, the medical officer of the Nabob of Arcot, as having used his influence with Dasthalican³ to deliver the priest from the unbearable vexations of the Reddi of a village, who, by the aid of the Brahmins, gave no end of trouble to the Christians. He here remarks that the Moors, particularly the higher officials, were, as a rule, well disposed towards the priests, and not unfrequently protected them against the intrigues of the pagans. As an example he relates the following :

1. in the south.

2. This is as true now as it was 200 years ago, with very few honourable exceptions.

3. Dost-ali-Khan.—Descendants of this Pereyra family are still living at Chittoor.

“A feast was being celebrated at the village of Ariendel. One of the customary but extraordinary ceremonies at this feast was the marriage of the goddess with a young man of the Pariah caste, who, amongst other things, had to put a bracelet on her arms. This done, he acquired the right to beat the idol, for had she not become his wife¹? There is in every village a Toti (sweeper) who is a public servant and, among other duties, has to sweep the surroundings of the gods and goddesses. Sometimes there are two such families, and, in that case, the work and the benefits attached thereto are divided between them. This was the case at Ariendel. One family had become Christian. By an amicable understanding with the heathen party, the Christians had for years abstained from all superstitious practices leaving these to their confrères. Last year, however, they fell out, and, when the above-mentioned feast came round, the heathen party, in order to bring the Christians into trouble, refused to perform the ceremony, saying it was the other family's turn. By reason of the authority invested in him, the village headman insisted on the ceremony being gone through, but he met with a persistent refusal, always receiving the same brave reply that they could on no account serve or recognise their false gods. A crowd soon gathered whilst the dispute was rising to a pitch. The Brahmin ruler over

1. The Hindoo is lord over his wife : no one dare question his right to do with her as he pleases.

that part of the country¹ came passing by in his palanquin. Scarcely giving himself time to learn the cause of all this ado, indignant at the contempt wherewith his gods were treated, he flung his loaded stick at one of the two Christian brothers and ordered both to be put in chains. Two of the family escaped and ran off to inform the priest.

“The Pariah Christians at Arcot, hearing of this, at once devised means to succour their brethren. These Christians are all more or less in the employ of the Viceroy² as caretakers of the elephants and horses in the army. One of the principal officers at court interested himself on their behalf and reported the matter. The mischievous Brahmin was ordered to release at once the two brothers and to appear at court to give an account of his doings. Meanwhile these poor men had been nine full days with their feet in the stocks. Their families had been driven from their home, and their cattle confiscated, all of which was now restored.

“The Moors respect these Christians because of their fidelity to their faith. Whether in town or in camp, they observe their fasts and their feasts. In the former they have their church, and in the latter they carry about a large tent, which is to them what the ark of the covenant was to the Israelites.”

1. “*Intendant de ce canton.*”

2. The Nabob of Arcot.

Now follows an interesting dissertation on the fact that, as St. Paul asserts, the heathen nations were not left without a testimony of the coming of the world's Redeemer, justifying the words "*Iipse erit expectatio gentium.*"

"The Hindus have embodied this testimony in an old book called the Bharatha-Shastram. In the third volume, which bears the title of Aranya Parvam, or the Adventures of the forest, after a long detail of the disorders and misfortunes which will come upon the Caliyugam (the last and present age of the Hindus), Marcandevudu, an Indian sage, addressing Dharma-Rajah, one of their greatest kings, expresses himself as follows :¹

"Then, that is, at the end of the *Caliyugam*, a *Brahmin* shall be born in the town of *Sambalam*, named *Vishnu Yesu*. He shall be endowed with the knowledge of the divine scriptures and all sciences without having spent time to acquire this knowledge. This is why he shall be called *Sarwa Bhoulmudu* (one

1. The Telugu text, as given in the *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, will be found in the Appendix. It was with difficulty reconstructed from the obscure and wholly mutilated form printed in Latin characters. The language so reproduced is not very elegant. A copy of the Telugu text taken from the present printed *Aranya Parvam*, as also a copy of the Sanskrit version, are likewise given. They differ considerably from each other as they differ from the old copy. There were, no doubt, several versions in circulation, when scribes had it much their own way. The word *Kalki* does not appear in Father Calmette's text as it does in both versions mentioned. However, if we accept Father Calmette's explanation as to a misreading of the word *swa* (self) into *aswa* (horse), it does not seem a difficult feat for an oriental poet to have added on to the story a *kalki* or bridle.

who has a perfect knowledge of everthing). Then what was impossible to any one else shall be accomplished by him. This Brahmin, Vishnu Yesu, associating with those of his own race, shall purge the world from sin, cause justice and truth to reign, and, offering the sacrifice of the horse, will give to the Brahmins the universe as their portion. But when he shall have reached old age, he shall retire into the desert to do penance; and see here the order which this Vishnu Sharma shall establish among the people: He shall establish virtue and truth among the Brahmins and shall keep the four castes within the limits of their laws. It is then that the first age shall reappear. This supreme king shall render the sacrifice of the horse so common among the nations that even the solitudes shall not be deprived of it. The Brahmins, established in virtue, shall occupy themselves exclusively with the ceremonies of religion and of the sacrifices. They will shine forth in works of penance and all other virtues which follow in the wake of truth, and they shall spread everywhere the splendour of the holy scriptures. The seasons following each other in admirable order, the rains shall fertilise the earth in due season and the harvest shall be plentiful. Milk shall flow in abundance, and the earth, being as it was in the first age, the people shall be inebriated with joy and prosperity.¹

1. This sounds very much like "*fluit lac et mel*" and "*renovabis faciem terrae*"

“On this our Father Superior makes the following reflections: The book above cited, in one of its previous chapters, alleges that each of these four ages is composed of three thousand years, that, at the end of the Caliyugam which is the fourth, Vishnu, assuming human nature, will be born in the form of a Brahmin, called Yasudu, to deliver the earth from all evils, that he will exterminate the sinners, etc. We are now in the four thousand eight hundred and thirtieth year of the Caliyugam, according to Indian calculation. If, therefore, each age does not count more than three thousand years, it follows that it ended a thousand eight hundred and thirty years ago, and that the Redeemer, who is here foreshadowed by the name of Yasudu, has already come. Moreover, it is remarkable that the Hebrew word Yesuah, because of its soft *s* is pronounced very much like the soft *s* of the Indians. With regard to the *Aswa Meda*, which signifies the sacrifice of the horse, the Indians may have been mistaken as to the meaning of this word. The Hebrew *iasa* (*salvabit*) has certainly some affinity with the Sanskrit *aswa* (*aswam* = a horse.) It is therefore possible that by an error of language they substituted the sacrifice of the horse for that of the Redeemer, and that, through this mistaken translation, some may have even gone so far as to speak of Vishnu’s incarnation as a horse, as some have actually done. I say some, because there is no equivocation in *this* book, and far from interchanging the terms, it distinctly says, as

appears from the text, that a 'Brahmin called Yasu... shall be born.' And, should there be any obscurity as to the name Yasu, at least there is no doubt whatever that the prophecy refers to a liberator who shall be God himself ; for the Indians take Vishnu to be God.

"To these reflections I shall add my own observations : First, as to the antiquity of this book, which I conclude from the very text. Somewhere, before the above cited prediction, the author assigns to the whole of the four ages twelve thousand years. The three first being fabulous, it is easy to see, having regard to the exaggerated and imaginative style of the Indians, that they have endeavoured to make the four ages of equal duration. Three Brahmins, to whom I gave the passage to read, assured me they had no doubt but that the author intended three thousand years for each age. The fourth, which is called Caliyugam, is the epoch which appears to me to coincide with the birth of Noah or with the Deluge, the Indian calculation differing only eight hundred and fourteen years from the Vulgate, and considerably less from the Septuagint. The Caliyugam, as before remarked, counts now four thousand eight hundred and thirty years. If that is so, this book cannot be less than a thousand and eight hundred years old, and therefore anterior to the birth of Jesus Christ. If it were of a later date, i.e., posterior to that event, how could the author, who even then should have counted more than three thousand years since the Caliyugam began,

how could he have given only three thousand years to this epoch, and predict as an event in the far future a birth which had to take place within the limits of that very age ?

“ As to the name of the promised Redeemer, I read in the text *Iesudu* (Yesudu) and I translate it into *Iesu* (Yesu). And this is my reason : mention has already been made of the similarity in the Hebrew and Indian languages as to the soft *s*. As to the first syllable *ia* (ya) and *ie* (ye), they are interchangeable, and vary so little, that some copyists use them promiscuously. The words *Ievariki* and *Iegyam*, which are to be found on the same page, have their first syllable in *ia*, exactly like *Iasudu*, or as I read it, *Iesudu*. One of our most learned Christian Brahmins, reading to me the text several times, always pronounced it *ie* (ye). There is no difficulty about the ending *du*. It is an affix or ending common to all masculine nouns. So that *Yesudu* differs no more from *Yesu* than *Tiberius* differs from *Tibère*. Each language has its own special terminations. We are obliged, therefore, to translate this word into *Yesu*, just as the Indians will have to write *Yesudu* when they translate *Yesu* or the Hebrew *Iesua* into their language. Having thus fairly established the name of the Redeemer, let us now see what are his characteristics.

“ The place of his birth is the village or town of *Sambalam*. I shall not attempt to support my contention by drawing attention to the similarity existing

between Balam and *Bethlem*, for this may be a mere coincidence ; although, when a case is supported from so many points of view, the slightest proof lends weight. Here the meaning of the word accords with the sound, and where the one should fail, the other supplies the defect. *Bethlem* means *house of bread*, and *Sambalam* is the daily bread¹ of soldiers, servants and of all persons who are in employment. The etymology of this word is probably the Tamil *Samba* or *Sambali*, names which are given to a kind of rice, and everyone knows that rice is the bread of India. The Telugu says *Samba* possessing a hard and a soft *s*, but the Tamil or Malabar has no letter to differentiate between *sa* and soft *sha*.

“I may add as a remarkable fact that the Indians, who have not a single proof to show that any of their various metamorphoses or fabulous incarnations have been predicted, should have been so exact regarding this prophesy in all its particulars. So that the name, caste, place of birth, and deeds to be performed, are all unmistakably established. Paganism, which makes gods, at her pleasure, of heroes who are dead, does not make gods of those who are yet to be born ; a proof that a prediction so precise had undoubtedly a foreign origin.

“*Vishnu Iesu*. It has been said above that the Indians understand by *Vishnu*, God. Not that all the attributes applied to Vishnu become the true God.

1. *Batyam*.

Vishnu is evidently a monstrous creation of idolatry. But there can be no doubt that, in several passages of their works, the Indians assign to him qualities truly divine, although these are not found consecutively enumerated or given in order. It is moreover not without a semblance of truth that this was the name given to the true God in primitive times. Pagans may have profaned that name as they have that of *Parameswarudu* (Supreme Lord) and of *Jagadiswarudu* (master of the world)—names which they have transferred to *Ruthren*. Vishnu, to whom they attribute as many as ten fabulous incarnations, is, according to the system most generally accepted, the second god in the Indian trinity.

“*Sarwa Bhoumudu*. It is a singular and very striking fact that they should speak of him as knowing the sacred scriptures and possessing all knowledge without previous study or learning.

“I have translated the word *vedam* by *sacred scriptures*. The Brahmins invariably tell us that by *vedam* they understand the word of God. Ramudu or Ramen the most famous incarnation of Vishnu, goes through all the difficulties of the grammar, and it took him years to acquire the knowledge he possessed. Only of this Bhoumudu can we say, as of the true Redeemer; how does he know all things who has never acquired human knowledge in the ordinary course?¹

1. Unde huic sapientia haec et virtute, (Math XIII 54), Unde ergo huic omnia ista (St. Mark VI 2).

“He shall associate with his own (with those of his race). The text has ‘*with the Brahmins*’. This is easily explained if we accept the system of those who say the Brahmins are of the race of Abraham. If to this no other objection were raised than that of distance of place, one could answer that it presents no more difficulty than that the Lacedemonians should call themselves, as they do in Machabees, the children of Abraham. And these words of the text “*he will give the earth to the Brahmins*,” would well correspond with the pretended worldly kingdom which the Jews expected at the birth of the Redeemer.

“What is said of the destruction of sin and of the reign of justice and truth is the plainest index to the veracity of this prophecy. It clears up all the other points. As to the sacrifice to be instituted by the Redeemer, it correctly tallies with the prediction of the prophet Malachy. ‘*Ab ortu solis usque ad occasum magnum est nomen meum in gentibus, et in omni loco sacrificatur et offertur nomini meo oblatio munda.*—From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof my name is great among the gentiles, and there shall be offered to me in all places a sacrifice and a clean oblation.’ The Telugu text has this to the letter: ‘He shall render sacrifice to be offered among all nations even in the solitudes.’

“*Pujalu* is the word which we use to express the sacrifice of the Mass.

“That penance and all virtue should flourish and that the divine word should spread everywhere,—is not all this an image of the prosperity of the Church ?

“The false redemptions, which form the subject of most of the metamorphoses of Vishnu, are limited to the destruction or slaying of some tyrant or to other mere trifles. This is the only one which exhibits a true character. It is, moreover, the only one given as an event to be expected, the others are fancies made up after the supposed facts.

“*Aswa Meda* (sacrifice of the horse):—This is the only point requiring elucidation. It is at best a figure which does not suit the picture, and militates against, and detracts from, its trustworthiness. I cannot believe that it came from the same hand. He who inserted it can never have been the author of the rest. The original writer who, in every respect, exhibits such manifest marks of veracity by a statement of facts, which harmonise to a nicety, could not have failed to perceive the fallacy of so incongruous and jarring a note. Let it be observed that immediately before it is said that *it would be impossible to be accomplished by any other but him*. Among the four things supposed to be executed by this Redeemer, the sacrifice of the horse is one. Conceding that the other three are beyond the power of mortals, surely the sacrifice of a horse is not. As a matter of fact, many of their Rajahs have offered it. We must, therefore, necessarily conclude that the author cannot have intended it to bear that meaning.

“I think I can guess the origin of this error and I believe my conjecture is highly probable. If in the old books, or one of the first forms on which the Indian copyist wrote, an *a* has slipped in by oversight or mistake, we should have to read *swa*-meda instead of *aswa*-meda. This little correction gives it at once a perfect sense. *Swa*-meda would then mean *his* sacrifice or *self-sacrifice*, namely, the sacrifice which, in very deed, the Redeemer offered on the cross, which characterises His passion and death ; and would, at the same time, as in the sequence of the text, foreshadow the perpetuation thereof in the daily sacrifice of the Mass offered all over the world by His ministers. Thus explained, the text offers no difficulty whatever. Should, however, the reference as given above to the Hebrew root of *iasa* (salvabit) be more acceptable, even that would explain the error.

“*Vishnu Sharma* :—I have not attempted to translate this word. The explanation given me by a young Brahmin, as being an appellation given to penitents, does not seem reliable ; although, if true, we might render its meaning by the *God-penitent*, which would not be altogether improbable.

“*Rama prabhuvu* :—In rendering this by *supreme King*, I am justified by the tenour of the text. As no one can give me the meaning or etymology of the word *Rama*, I take its signification from the Hebrew. *Prabhuvu*, in the language of the country, means *King*, *Prince*. In Hebrew *Rama* signifies *excelsus* (great,

supreme). A learned pandit, assuring me that *Rama* bears the same meaning as *Karta*, has confirmed me in my interpretation. Now, *Karta* means *lord, master*, and can, in the strictest sense, be only applied to God as the supreme Master or Lord. The Moors use this term for God when speaking in the language of the country. I have heard it said, moreover, that *Ram* is used in Hindustan and in the Northern countries of India to signify God. *Raïm*, which is very like it, is in vogue amongst the Moors having the same sense. Its etymology and its root is derived, it seems to me, from *Rama* (*esse*) to be, *Raïm*, (*who is*). This is the name God gives Himself in the Gospel, and in speaking to Moses, He says: ‘Dices: *Qui est*, misit me.—*He who is* sent me.’ ‘Ego sum *qui sum*.—I am *Who am*.’¹

“All this might be liable to be called in question if *Rama*, like other names I have cited, had not in the dim past been applied to the true God, but which unfortunately, since the apotheosis² of the famous *Ramen* or *Rama*, king of *Ajoti*, has been misapplied. The names *God* and *King*, both applicable to the Messiah, are thus combined in the term *Rama prabhuvu*. Some may wish to make *Rama* correspond with *Sambalam* or *Bethlem* according to the Scripture text, ‘*Vox in Rama audita est*,’³ the one explanation thereby supporting the other.”

1. A Brahmin convert asserts that *Rama* in the mind of the Hindu, means “he who sports in the heart of his devotees.”

2. Deification.

3. A voice was heard in *Rama*. (Matt. ii, 18.)

Here, after the ordinary epistolary formalities and good wishes to the countess and the whole illustrious family of Coetlogon, the letter ends. Then follows :

LETTER

From Fr. Calmette S.J.,
To M. de Cartigny, Intendant Général
des Armées Navales de France.

Vencatigiri in the Carnatic,
The 24 Jan. 1733¹.

“ Since the French Jesuits, thirty years ago, opened out this mission of the Carnatic after the model of Madura, the work has extended itself as far as six hundred miles inland,² beginning from Pondicherry in the south to Bukapuram in the North³ which latter is the latest acquired station, and lies in about the same latitude (*a la hauteur de*) as Masulipatam.

“ We have sixteen churches spread over this length not counting the two which the French make use of at Pondicherry and at Ariancupam. We are six missionaries in the interior, working for the pagans. Two more are preparing to join us.....

4

1. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.* VII. 503.

2. *Deux cents lieues* : following, it may be presumed, the direction of the ground of missionary activity then covered.

3. Then called the Dupad-sima.

4. Here he refers to new missions to be opened in Bengal. The Rajah of Orixá and some other Rajahs had asked for Jesuit Priests to establish themselves in their Kingdoms for astronomical researches.

“The King,¹ having formed the design of establishing an Oriental library, the Abbé Bignon has honoured us with the charge of collecting Indian books. This is of great use to us for the advancement of religion. By this means we have acquired books of importance, which, constituting as it were the arsenal of paganism, affords us the essential weapons wherewith to combat the teachers of idolatry, and of which they feel the thrust most keenly ; such as books on their philosophy, and theology, and, above all, that of the four Vedas, which contains the Brahminical law, and which, from time immemorial, has been looked upon in India as a sacred book of incontestable authority as coming from God.

“ From the time missionaries came to India it was thought impossible to obtain these books so much prized in this country. Even we would never have succeeded in getting them, if it were not for some Christian Brahmins who secretly lived among them. Otherwise the Brahmins would never have communicated them to any European, who is considered the enemy of their religion. Except those of their own caste, the Indians themselves are kept in ignorance of these books. It was looked upon as a crime to sell the books of the law or to impart any knowledge of them to any one but a Brahmin of the sacerdotal order ; for, the rest of mankind is looked upon as profane. In reality, it is nothing but the fear that, by communicating a knowledge of them, they would

1. of France.

lessen the respect they rigourously exact from the people to the extent of having sacrifices offered them and causing themselves to be honoured as deities.

“It is surprising that, being the depositories of these books, the greater number of them understand nothing of their meaning. They are written in Sanskrit, a very ancient language, which is to the learned what Latin is to us. But as to the sense or the signification of words, they are at a loss to interpret them, without the additional help of the *Maha Bhāgyam* or the great Commentary, the study of which raises a Brahmin to a pandit of the first order. Such a pandit imparts his blessing, whereas the rest of the Brahmins can do no more than salute in return.

“Up till now, we have had little intercourse with this class of ‘savants.’ Since, however, they have come to know that we understand their books and the Sanskrit language, they approach us more freely. Being more enlightened and guided by better principles, they are better able to follow us in a discussion than other Brahmins and they are more ready to admit the truth when they lack an argument to oppose it. We do not, however, find that they embrace the known truth. At all times God has chosen the simple and the weak to confound the wisdom and the power of the world.¹ Nevertheless we do not cease to discuss and dispute with them, but with that tact and forbearance which truth demands, hoping that, though

1. Quae stulta sunt mundi elegit Deus ut confundat sapientes et infirma mundi elegit Deus ut confundat fortia. I Cor., i. 27.

they do not humbly submit themselves to the Gospel, they may at least profit by our word. It is of the greatest advantage to the spread of religion that paganism should be shown in its true light. It must be silenced in our disputations, and compelled to admit its errors and its secret practices. The result is that its prestige is actually on the decline in those places where we have christians and churches. We do not, of course, always reap the best part of what we have sown. That portion must abide the time when God in His mercy will stir up the bulk of the nation, when people, drawn by each other's example, will enter by groups or crowds into the holy place according to the prophecy of Isiah: *Venite ascendamus ad montem Domini, et docebit nos vias suas, et ambulabimus in semitis ejus.*¹

“When at Pondicherry, I met one of our missionaries from China, whose words I shall never forget. If, he said, a missionary were to do no more than build a church in a place where God is yet unknown, he has already accomplished much and need not, with regret, look back on his labours. We, in this mission, are not quite limited to such results. By the grace of God, which has seconded our efforts, we have missionaries in the Carnatic, who can count nearly ten thousand christians in their district. The oldest missions and those nearer to Madura are the more numerous. Some have been established only recently and give

1. Ah ! when shall this come to pass ?

hope of great results, the christians being very fervent, as, for instance, Bukapuram which I have already mentioned.

“That the Church of India is God’s work, is manifest no less on account of the many miracles as of the constant contradictions and adversities. These miracles are not rare, and testify to the power our christians have of expelling the devil from those who are possessed. Numbers of poor Indians are tormented by the evil one in such a cruel manner that frequently their joints get dislocated. As soon as they are brought to the Church their cure is certain ; Satan has no more power over them. There are a great many people who do not believe in possessions, although we find a good number of them cited in the Gospel. It must, however, be borne in mind that Satan has a far greater sway over idolators than over the souls of the faithful. A few years of experience will disillusion the most sceptic. These visible marks of God’s help and grace afford us great consolation, and increase our devotion for a mission where God manifests Himself in so signal a manner.

“I have spoken of our churches, that is, of those which are for our use in the districts. Besides these, there are several little chapels here and there in the towns and villages which the christians use for their daily devotions and specially for public prayers on Sundays and feast days, when, after the usual devotions, the catechist gives an instruction in the

catechism. The Mass prayers are recited the same way as if the priest were there; disputes are settled on these occasions, and a penance imposed on the guilty. In case of a serious scandal, he or she is excluded from the assembly. Only the other day I gave permission for the building of such a chapel. This practice is most common among the Pariah-caste which is the lowest of all castes, but at the same time the one which has given us the most christians. From the beginning it has always been God's will that the poor should be the foundation stones in the building up of His Church; "*Pauperes evangelizantur.*" It is from this caste that the Mahomedan Governor of Vellore has formed a company of soldiers. But no others than christians are admitted. Nor will he acknowledge any of them unless they wear the rosary round their neck¹. Such, Monsieur, is the present state of our mission in the Carnatic Kingdom, etc., etc."

ANOTHER INTERESTING LETTER.

Père Calmette, S.J., to Père Delmaos, S.J.

*Ballapuram, 17 Sept. 1735.*²

"The interest you take in the propagation of the faith in these pagan lands and the zeal with which you contribute thereto by your annual donations, impels me to give you an account of some of the blessings which God deigns to impart to our feeble efforts.

1. What a contrast to the action of the British Government in abolishing all, or nearly all, the Christian or Tamil Regiments! One day they may sorely regret it.

2. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, VII, 509.

I shall begin by making you acquainted with the catechist who is supported by your liberality. His name is Paul. All my catechists are called by that name. This Paul is endowed with an extraordinary talent for disabusing the Indians of their superstitions and of instilling into their hearts a taste for christian truth. His conversion is a very singular one, and is connected with circumstances not unworthy of your attention. An inveterate malady urged the prince of Kotta-Kôta to visit our church at Krishnapuram in the hope of getting cured. He went there accompanied by his daughter Wobalamma, a girl of not quite eight years of age. He had several interviews with the priest, the conversation always running on religious topics. In fact the good seed began to take root in his heart, but the passions and the cares of this world soon stifled its growth. It was however not altogether lost, for it fructified in the heart of the young princess and grew stronger as she advanced in years. It so happened that one day a christian goldsmith called at the palace with jewelry for sale. This gave Wobalamma a chance to speak to this christian and to obtain from him in writing the prayers she had heard the christians recite in the church at Krishnapuram. She longed to visit the church in person, and to be fully instructed by the Priest in the laws of the good God of whom she had heard him speak when young, but the customs of the country did not permit persons of her sex to leave the palace, nor even to speak to strangers. How then was her desire to be

realised! God, however, inspired her with a plan. If she could manage, so she reasoned, to convert one of the servants in the employ of the palace to her views, the way would be open to her. Her choice fell on Paul, who afterwards became my catechist. She spoke to him about the principal christian doctrines according to the little light she had obtained when a child, the intensity of her desire supplying the want of her knowledge. There is no language so persuasive as that of the heart.

“Once she had gained over Paul to her cause and instilled in him the desire to embrace the christian religion, she sent him to the priest with orders not to return till he had been fully instructed and been baptized. “Learn everything thoroughly,” she said, “for the better you are grounded in the knowledge of the law of God, the better you will be able to communicate the same to me.”

“Paul did as he was told. The firstlings of the christian seed, sown by this young princess, rapidly developed, and took deeper and deeper root by the superior light which the Priest’s instructions threw into his soul. After he had obtained a thorough knowledge of the christian religion he was baptized.

“Scarcely had he returned to the palace, when he had occasion to show forth his zeal for the faith in a very marked manner. The prince had ordered him to go and bring him some cocoanuts. It would seem the young neophyte was in no way bound to question

the legitimacy of so simple an order. In fact he was already on his way to execute the order when suddenly it struck him that perhaps his master, as he sometimes did, might make an offering of these cocoanuts to the idols. Hence he retraced his steps and respectfully asked if that was what they were intended for, "What is that to you," said the prince, "do what you are told." "It matters a great deal," replied the neophyte, "unless you answer my question I cannot obey." "And why?" asked the astonished prince. "Because I adore the one true God, Creator of heaven and earth. To participate even in the least in the service of idols would be sinful." Strange to relate this straightforward reply did not irritate the prince, and Paul did not lose his good esteem.

"Wobalamma on her part continued to attend to her religious instructions. In her eagerness to receive baptism she proposed several schemes to Paul, her instructor, for the attainment of this end. But zeal outran her discretion. "The church," she said one day, "is only 9 miles¹ from here; cannot we manage to go there unobserved in the night? We can slip down by the walls of the fortress and come back the same way." Paul was too prudent a man to make himself a party to a plan which would expose the princess to disgrace and himself to the loss of his life.

"Wobalamma became, however, more and more confirmed in her desire to be made a member of God's

1. Kotta-Kota lies 9 miles due south of Krishnapuram.

Kingdom and longed for the day that this grace would be given her. She entirely abstained from taking part in any pagan ceremonies. Every one in the palace knew of her predisposition for the christian religion. Her relatives thought that by hastening on her marriage they would wean her from this strange affection. But her answer to these allurements was that she would rather not marry and remain always a virgin, a choice as rare and unheard of in India as it was among the Jews. No means were left untried to dissuade her from this resolution, but all to no purpose. Finally, however, the young man who sought her hand, aware of the cause of her resistance, addressed himself to Paul and begged of him to intercede giving his word that, if the princess would consent to be his spouse, directly the marriage ceremonies were over, he would permit her to go to the church and get baptized. Armed with this promise Paul undertook the office of mediator. At first the princess expressed her fear that this novel state of dependence might be an obstacle to her salvation. However, assured that she would be allowed the free exercise of her religion, she no longer opposed the importunities of her relatives and gave her consent.

“Paul had to stand the brunt of it all. To him was attributed the princess’ open contempt for the idols and the vanities of the world. Nor did he disguise his sentiments. Whatever the occasion, he always gave public testimony of his faith. He would not, even in the presence of the prince, hesitate to

ridicule the superstitious honour paid to their false gods. Such repeated acts of disrespect naturally brought on him the indignation of the prince, so that finally he entirely lost the latter's goodwill.

"It happened that a heathen festival was being celebrated. The special god of the palace was carried in procession through the whole town. Paul was standing at the guard's room when they passed. Every one rose and made his *namaskaram*.¹ Paul was asked again and again to pay due respect to the idol, but on the contrary he indicated by his whole demeanour how much he loathed the gods whom all the town adored. The prince having been informed of his conduct, Paul knew the consequences and lost no time in deciding what course to take. His stay at the palace had now been made impossible. Hence he left the prince's employ, and choosing the service of a far greater master, he came to the Church and offered his services as a catechist.

"Shortly after Paul's departure Wobalamma's wedding was celebrated. On the last day of the ceremonies, when going outside the town with all the apparel of palanquins and horses,² Paul happened to pass that

1. Mark of veneration.

2. It is the custom among the Telugus at weddings for the bride to leave the town or village and wait outside for the bridgroom to fetch her back. It is to signify that she "*aligi poinadi*" i.e., is discontented over something and left the place. It would be a blessing if what is here done in allegory were carried out when the reality occurs in after-times. The husband is very seldom persuaded to be so flexible and courteous then.

way on his usual round. As soon as the princess (seated in her palanquin) saw him, she called him to her side. "Had not she," quoth she, "consented to this marriage solely on condition of being allowed to become a Christian? Had not Paul been the principal mediator in obtaining her consent? Now is my chance," said she, oblivious of the part she had to play in the ceremonies, "we cannot have a better opportunity. We are away from the palace now; come, take me to the church, and let my baptism be the crowning part of to-day's festivities." She addressed herself to those about her, and begged of them to assist her in carrying out her project. Unnecessary to say that her request was not only unheeded, but treated with contempt and derision. The sequence, however, showed but too well the earnestness of her purpose.

The promise so firmly given was soon forgotten. Under some pretext or other her most fervent remonstrances were evaded and deferred from day to day. Finally her relatives took counsel together and determined on a plan which would not fail to draw her mind away from her cherished object. Persuasion and cajolery had failed. They now put her to a test so rigorous and degrading that only those who know India can understand its purport. They treated her as having lost her caste depriving her of its privileges. They made her take her meals apart. Especially on festival days, on which the partaking of food plays such a prominent part, and on all public occasions they managed to treat her with confusion and shame

Wobalamma bore all this with patience and fortitude and rejoiced that by being thus treated her attachment to the Christian religion became more and more known.

Taught in the school of trials to despise all human respect, she used part of her time to instruct the ladies of the palace in the truths of religion. But God, either to punish her opponents or to hasten her reward, decreed to call her to Himself the very year of her marriage. As soon as she became aware of the dangerous nature of her illness, she appealed to her husband, throwing herself at his feet and in tears besought him to send to the church for the priest to baptise her. However, what men refused to grant, was no doubt given her by God in answer to such holy sentiments and fervent desires. Like Valentinian, whose praises were sung by St. Ambrose, she also merits to be regarded as a Christian, who, without the actual waters of baptism, joined the elect of God by the fervour of her love. The odour of her virtuous life has since her death made even more impression on the minds of her acquaintances than her words could have done in life. Some of her lady relatives in the palace have since been baptized together with their children, and moreover the whole of that family has conceived a great regard for our holy religion. The prince, it is said, expressed a wish to have a church built in his residence.

As to Paul, in whom this little princess placed such great confidence, after having opened a new

mission at Vavelipadu¹ to the North of Punganur, is now living at the church of Ballapuram, where he has had his share in the events which I shall now relate. It is about eight years since the Dasaries began a severe persecution against the Christians in this part of the country. The vineyard of the Lord, struck with sterility for a time, brought forth nothing but thistles and thorns as the reward for the sweat of its evangelical labourers. But God, to show forth His power over the hearts of men, was pleased to enlighten one of the chief Dasaries, the leader of the persecution, who, by submitting himself to His holy law, became an instrument for the manifestation of His glory. The Dasaries are singularly devoted to Vishnu, an Indian divinity, whose slaves they claim to be. Speaking from the pagan's point of view, it seems to me that the opinion supported by the authority of their books and that of the learned among them, which declares this divinity to be the god of the sea, is the most probable. The Dasaries are like his Tritons. They always carry a conch in their hands. This conch is a sort of horn made from a sea shell well set and worked and embellished. Timmaya (such is the name of the aforesaid head of the Dasaries) had, like St. Paul, distinguished himself during the time of the persecution, going from house to house taking Christians to appear before the guru of the prince, when suddenly he was struck by some extraordinary malady which tormented him for two years.

¹. In the Cuddapah Dt. It is now called Wialavadu or Wyalapudu.

Having tried all known remedies, the doctors gave him up as a hopeless case. Many people ascribed his illness to magic or witchcraft, which is common enough in these heathen countries. A Christian relative of his advised him to seek first the salvation of his soul, and have recourse to Him who has the power of curing the body as well if He so chooses. Timmaya believed, turned his heart to God, threw aside his idols and all the magic knots, with which he had been covered, and took up his abode with the catechist in order to be instructed in the Christian doctrine. With the growth of his faith the illness decreased. Twenty days had barely elapsed when he found himself perfectly cured.

So astonishing a cure, however, attracted less attention than the fact of his having renounced his foolish deities. His relatives were exasperated. His brother, who, from interested motives, had apostatised from the faith, became now his declared enemy. He stirred up the Dasaries and had the catechumen brought to the Tsavadi¹ and tried his best to interest the officers and soldiers in their cause. But the latter, finding it was a mere religious question, sent him in the evening back to his house. Timmaya went straight to the church to thank God for having so mercifully delivered him from the hands of his enemies.

1. Where local courts were held.

Having thus given a public testimony of his faith, the priest was only too pleased to baptize him, his wife, and his children.

His brother, who had taken civil proceedings against the neophyte, with a view to gain the pagans over to his side, endeavoured to back up his claim on religious grounds, and accused him of having delivered up the idols. It was a delicate question, which might have involved the Christians in a fresh persecution; but the neophyte evaded all questions of a compromising nature, and, firm in the profession of his faith, took all responsibility upon himself. This bitterly enraged his enemies who ill-treated and abused him. The priest during these proceedings sent from time to time some one to console and encourage him. The catechist, a man well-known to all, of his own accord attended the proceedings. They vented their rage upon him and loaded him with abusive language. The man, quite calm and cool, appeared insensible to their insults. But when they stopped, he spoke and said: "Our religion teaches that there is great merit in suffering insults and injuries for God's name. If you will please continue flinging your curses at me, I promise you a good reward." This humorous and unexpected reply took them entirely by surprise. Some laughed in derision, others were struck with admiration. It so confounded the assembly, that he could take his departure with honour.

Leo,—this is the name Timmaya received in baptism,—was not the only one who brought honour to the Church of Jesus Christ. His wife, who was baptized by the name of Constantia, was not less firm. During the above proceedings, she with her children appeared several times before the assembly to inspire her husband with courage and to share in his affronts. All this happened, unknown to the prince, at the gates of the town,¹ where, according to the custom of the olden times, judgments were delivered sometimes by arbitration, sometimes by a sort of authority invested by custom in the captains who were in charge of the gates and other public places. As a rule, a row decides the question, and justice is dealt out on the side of the rowdiest and the highest bribe.

Whilst innocence was thuswise being oppressed and religion outraged in the person of Leo, it pleased God to undertake his defence. Bairé-Gavudu, uncle of the prince, having fallen sick, wished to see the priest, convinced that his blessing would do him more good than all other remedies. The priest was just returning from a neighbouring village, when some officers and a few soldiers met him by order of the prince. With this escort the priest entered the gate of the town, where Leo's prosecution was in process. The priest took a good look round as if to mark the men present and then proceeded on his way. This was all

1. The tsavidi, a well-built flat-roofed sort of court room consisting of a raised terrace or pyall on either side of the gate.

that was required. The crowd dispersed at once, surmising, of course, that the priest going up to the palace, would surely report the matter, and, being fully conscious of the irregularity of their conduct, hastily broke up their meeting and left the neophyte, whom they had detained two days and two nights in the lock-up, to proceed home in peace.....¹

Leo, however, did not long enjoy this apparent tranquility. Some Dasaries joined with his relations in declaring him fallen from caste, which is the severest trial for an Indian. However, as all did not adhere to this declaration, new measures were concerted to ruin him. Leo, knowing too well that hatred and fanaticism would stop at nothing, decided on voluntary exile, convinced that home and property would be a perpetual stumbling block in the way of his salvation. He betook himself to the Punganur country, where he died after two months, and obtained, we may confidently believe, the reward of his firm faith and sufferings. It was a great loss for Constantia, his wife, who now was exposed to new hardships. Punganur was destroyed by the Moors. Obligated to wander from place to place with her children, she had to struggle with endless misery. She could have rejoined her relations, but she knew this would have been at the risk of losing her faith. This treasure she

1. The detailed description of Fr. Calmet's reception at the palace is omitted as similar visits have been recorded before.

esteemed too highly to exchange for earthly comforts. It was the only but ample consolation in her dire poverty and she constantly exhorted her children never to wander away from the truth they had inherited. Surrounded by them she made this her last request and died, in her exile, a holy and enviable death.

Her brother, who had been baptized together with her and her family, suffered from asthma. Being thereby incapacitated from attending to his avocations, he was always at church assisting daily at the holy sacrifice. After a year of a most holy life, the death of the predestined crowned the fervour of his faith. His illness becoming hopeless, he was carried to his village Kandavaram. Being the only Christian in that place, he had several crosses painted on the walls of his room, so that, whichever way he turned, he could always fix his eyes on the sign of redemption. In this holy disposition he was fortified with all the rites of the Church. Not having always the catechist near him, he had asked his people to repeat to him, from time to time, the words: "Jesus, have mercy on me." These words, even when unconscious, were always sufficient to bring him to his senses.

Many people in Europe have difficulty to believe in the reality of witchcraft, possessions and all that relates to magical art. One year among these pagan people would soon convince them of the fact. There are truths which can be tested by the common people

as well as by the learned. It is forsooth much more difficult to accept the latter's gratuitous assertion that events, which are capable of silencing the greatest enemies of religion, should be nothing but pure imagination, a weakness of the mind in those who experience them.

In a caste which counted as yet not a single Christian and in which the women distinguish themselves by their modesty and retirement,¹ one of these has been brought to the fold in a manner well worthy of special record. Before her eyes were opened to the light of truth, she was constrained to defend her honour against the solicitations of one of her relatives. This man, to revenge his ill-success, had recourse, as she avers, to magic and witchcraft. In fact, she was attacked by one of those maladies, the length and symptoms of which convince the Indian doctor that they are not of the natural kind, and that no remedy will have any effect. Recourse must be had to those who have the secret of destroying the effect of such magic spells. She resorted, therefore, to a Brahmin; for it is a well-known fact that the Brahmins are not only the depositaries of the law, but also the interpreters of the magic art.

The *Adarvanam*, which is the fourth Vedam, contains the secret of setting the magic art in operation

1. This must be the Kamma caste. In that caste, the women do not go out to the fields or the well, *viz.*, the *ill'ellani Kammavaru*, which means, literally, those who do not leave the house. It would appear that the conversions in that caste took place in the Cuddappah Dt. as will be seen afterwards.

and of dispelling it, which is called the sacrifice of death and the sacrifice of homicide. Some years ago, it cost a Brahmin his life for having made use of this sacrifice against a person in high authority. He had apparently missed some words prescribed for this ceremony ; in which case, it is said, Satan makes the punishment fall on the sacrificer. An event which happened twenty-five years ago, when Ballapuram was besieged by the Mysore army, is still vivid in the memory of the people. A Brahmin attempted to frustrate the enemy's enterprise by a magic spell. For this end, he retired to Guribonda, a neighbouring town. Whilst engaged in the ceremonies as prescribed in the Adarvanam, Satan took hold of him and killed him on the spot. Those who took part in this sacrifice suffered the same fate. Being somewhat incredulous, I questioned a Brahmin of Guribonda, who gave me the name of the unfortunate man and all the circumstances connected with the event. But this is a digression. Let us return to our invalid. The Brahmin, who had been called in, observed a zig-zag crack in the wall of her compartment. In a fit of enthusiasm he exclaimed : ' I have discovered the cause of the evil. Chouhudu (the god of the serpents) has taken up his abode in this wall. No wonder, therefore, that he disturbs the peace of this house. What honours have you paid him ? Erect an altar to him and burn incense day and night without interruption.' The woman did as she was told, but, instead of one demon, a whole

legion came to torment her. She, then, had recourse to another magician, but with no better result. Every night, she was agitated by the most frightful phantasms, which tormented her to such an extent, that she became quite emaciated, losing all her strength. Six long months she had been suffering, when, at last, she had recourse to the priest. It required little persuasion to make her see the necessity of becoming a Christian, and, in fact, she there and then placed herself under instruction. What convinced the priest of the reality of her being possessed was the extraordinary change of colour which was visible in her face every now and again, and the violent spasms which entirely suspended the functions of all her senses without, however, depriving her of consciousness. These symptoms becoming more and more alarming, and fearing she might die, the priest had her taken to the church to administer baptism. Seated, as she was, on the floor, three persons had to keep her erect, and it was not till the words of exorcism were pronounced that she recovered her strength and was thus able to go through the rest of the ceremonies without support or assistance. When leaving the church, she assured the priest that she felt fully relieved. The sequel showed indeed that she was perfectly cured.¹ Ann—this is the name she received—

1. A similar case took place in Kottala in or about the year 1885. The woman gave the name of the devil of whom she was possessed. She was violent and had to be kept down by force till the waters of baptism were poured on her head. The perspiration from her body was so copious that she was lying as in a pool of water.

returned and moved about among her relatives, who were greatly surprised at this wonderful change. It turned the heart of her husband and her daughter, who both embraced the faith.

Among the gods of the land, there is one, of a peculiar sort. He wriggles on the top of the head in four or five tufts or patches of hair twisted like a rope, and gets himself worshipped in these respectable lodgings by the name of Gurunadhudu. For fear of irritating him, people pay him divine honours like they do to other gods. A young man, of a caste which is esteemed high because the prince of Ballapuram belongs to it, considering himself above such superstitious fear, had his tufts shaven off twice or three times, but they always re-appeared in this plaited fashion. The devil probably punished him for his contempt. He fell ill, his weakness became extreme, and his spirits drooped lower day by day. He resolved to become a Christian. From the moment he received baptism he recovered his strength of mind and body, and his hair, which had been cut in presence of the priest, has ever since grown in the natural way. This fact, joined to an edifying Christian life, has made a deep impression on the people of his village.....¹

1. Here follow a few similar conversions, notably among the Lingaites, instances of the power of Satan over the pagans reduced to nought by the saving waters of baptism, illustrating at the same time, in a signal manner, the heroic conduct of the new converts under very trying circumstances.

Just as, in the first Christian era, the Holy Ghost manifested Himself by selecting the poor in preference to the rich, so in like manner we experience the same here in India. The armies of the Mahrattas, who sweep every year over this part of the country to levy tribute, have among them a numerous and devoted Christian community, which is the cause of many conversions and baptisms. There is, in every one of their armies, a considerable number of Christian families. These neophytes have appointed a head who acts the part of catechist. They have a large tent for their religious services, which, on Sundays, they decorate as they would the church. All the Christians assemble there for prayer and instruction. An absentee is punished so severely that the priest found it necessary to moderate their zeal. A Mahratta officer, who was delivered from (the obsession of) the devil by a relic which a Christian hung around his neck, has preserved so great a veneration for this ambulant church, that on special feast days he sends offerings of oil and incense, and, as by his caste-rules he cannot mix with people of so inferior a rank, he stands at a little distance in front of the tent and there remains till the prayers are over.

Father Calmette further speaks¹ of the new churches, and the difficulty encountered in obtaining a building site. We learn that seven or eight years before, that is, about the year 1727, the first

1. The following is given in a condensed form, the narrative being of inordinate length.

church was built at Venkatigiri by Father Gargam, the same, as we shall see later on, who obtained the ground and built the church at Pedd'Aricatla.²

Whilst the building was in progress, the Rajah of Venkatigiri visited the priest, who was then putting up in a temporary straw hut. The church when completed was a nice and solid building. But, kind as the Rajah was, there were also enemies of the Christian religion, one in the person of the Rajah's own brother-in-law, Gopala Naidu by name. The other was the brother of the Rajah of Kangondi, named Rangappa Naidu, who, by reason of a division in his family, was at the time living at Venkatigiri. These two had sworn the destruction of the church. An occasion soon offered itself. The Moors laying siege to Venkatigiri formed their principal attack on the town from the side where the church stood. The Rajah therefore thought it necessary to have the compound wall pulled down. But these two bitter enemies, who with sinister intentions volunteered to defend that part of the town, overstepped the order, dismantled the the church as well, broke down part of its walls, robbed what was of any value and set fire to the rest. But God's vengeance was not slow in coming. The whole town was destroyed by the Moors. The citadel alone, at the cost of an excessive fine, was spared. The two leaders in the plunder of the church, and all those who

2. Nellore District.

assisted them in this act of vandalism, met with a most dire retribution.

Gopala Naidu, apparently blind to his own interests, went so far as to conspire against the Rajah. Special irons were being prepared for his intended captive, and he boasted to one of the catechists of the plans he would adopt so soon as he should have assumed authority. But the Rajah secretly heard of his intrigues. He was captured and locked up bound with the very shackles prepared for his prey. He managed, however, to escape. Whereupon the whole of his family was thrown into prison and all his goods confiscated. Those who had taken part in his plots were heavily mulcted and expelled from the territory, the chief among them being massacred by Gopala Naidu himself in his flight.

Rangappa Naidu, brother of the Rajah of Kangondi, who was one of the bitterest enemies of the Christian religion, with a hatred hereditary in his family, met with his retribution in a manner which was as awful as it was casual. Let us give Father Calmette's own words.

“Rangappa Naidu had gone on a visit to one of his relations at Kadappa-Nattam, a Moorish citadel on the borders of Venkatigiri. Here he was involved in the massacre, the particulars of which are as follow : The Rajah of Punganur was constantly at war with his neighbours. After having pillaged several villages and taken a citadel of the Nabob of Kolalam, he

fell on Kadappa-Nattam, which was subject to the Nabob of Arcot, the most powerful in these parts of India. His motive was revenge on a Mahratta who was in the service of the Rajah, his father, and who, after delivering up to the Moors the principal fortress of his state, had withdrawn to this his citadel.

“The Punganur forces were at first beaten back, but they returned to the charge with such a fury, that they succeeded in taking the town that same night and the citadel next morning. All prisoners of importance were conducted to Gondugallu on the frontier, where the Rajah had stayed behind. Among these was Rangappa Naidu. The Mahratta, aware of the fate awaiting him, walked boldly up to the Prince and answered him in arrogant terms. The Prince had him despatched on the spot, and, walking round the quivering corpse, overwhelmed it with low and vile insults. It was now Rangappa Naidu’s turn. ‘We have never quarrelled with each other,’ said the Rajah, ‘what cause have I given you to oppose me?’ We can only ascribe his fate to a just retribution from above, otherwise it is difficult to understand why he should not have been let go free. He was no more guilty than the Brahmin who begged for grace and obtained it. The governor¹ of Kadappa-Nattam, who had been wounded in the affray, was now brought before the prince together with his little son, a boy of 10 years of age. He implored the prince to be

1. Munsif of the place.

satisfied with taking his life, but to spare that of his youthful son. The prince was inexorable; the poor boy was massacred before the eyes of his father. Thirty people of importance either by birth or position perished in this manner. The governor was made to witness this ghastly slaughter till the last, and only then his head was taken.

“The prince had all these heads brought to him, and sprinkled flowers over them as if to offer sacrifice. The next day he ordered them to be taken to his capital to serve as a trophy of his victory. Two heads hung from the neck of the elephant which he himself rode, the others were thrown up in the air and caught back again in the hands of his men as they preceded him at his entry into the capital. These heads were exposed the whole day at the entrance of the guards’ room and next day they were hung aloft near the town between two poles.

“The prince has had to pay very heavily for this excess of wrath. The Moors quickly assembled their forces, and having with the united strength of the tributary princes, formed a considerable army, marched into Punganur territory. The prince, losing courage and despairing of his life, resolved on taking flight. Before, however, setting out, he put to the torture the man whose counsel had brought on him this misfortune, and then gained his principal fortress in the mountains. But even here he doubted his

safety and betook himself to Kadappa, placing a misguided trust in the Nabob whose tributary he was.¹ The latter, on information received from the offended Nabob, kept him amused for some time and then threw him into prison, where he is still.

"The town of Punganur was taken after a few days' resistance. The palace of the prince was destroyed, the town burnt down and its walls dismantled. We shared in the general desolation, for neither was the church spared. The Moors placed an infant prince on the throne, appointed a Brahmin, Somappa by name, administrator, restored peace and withdrew.

"During these troublesome times the priest had not been able to visit the Punganur Christians; but profited of the first opportunity to do so. He took up his abode in the house of one of the Christians where he had the honour of receiving a visit from the Brahmin administrator with fifty of his suite. The conversation led from science on to religion. They agreed as to the unity of God. But Somappa, as the Brahmins are wont to, added the doubtful remark: "*Kechavova, Sivova,*" or Kechavadu or Sivudu. The first is a name for Vishnu, the second for Rudrudu. 'Well,' said the priest, 'have your doctors after so many centuries not yet been able to settle which of the two is god? If it is so obscure a

1. The Nabob of Kadappa had in 1713 raised this tribute to Rs. 32,000 and 2,000 footmen in time of war. (N. Arcot Manual.)

point to decide, why not put them both aside and accept a God Creator? The prejudice of those born in a sect is so strong, that they do not even so much as examine the terms. Kechavudu, to be sure, means nothing else than the *hairy one*.' Somappa doubting if this were the true meaning, the priest replied: 'It is clear from your own authorised books: Kechadu (= hair), Kechakan (= a head of hair), Kechavudu (= the hairy). By giving him hair you deprive him of the divine nature, which is pure spirit, as you must concede yourselves from the expressions Niranjana, Nirakara, Akayaga, etc. (= without members, without figure, without body).'—At the end of the discussion the priest asked him for a piece of ground within the town to build a house, which the Brahmin granted.

“This house was soon erected and as speedily became the centre of new conversions. Among the neophytes is a family the eldest of whom, a staunch idolator, is a captain. The rest of the family living separately have embraced the truth. They were scarcely baptized when their faith was put to a severe test. Bali Naidu, the eldest, who by blood and by his position exercised his influence over the rest of the family, invited his brothers to a festive meal in honour of their ancestors, which sort of festivities is always accompanied by superstitious ceremonies. To the honour of their name they one and all refused to accept the invitation.

“A few days later the Brahmin Somappa accompanied by twelve Brahmins and over a hundred followers paid the priest a second visit. The conversation again ran on religion. One of their systems is that the soul is universal, and they believe that it is the same soul in every body, according to their theological maxim: *Sheriram binnam, paramātmam ékam* (the body is different, the soul is one). On this principle they explain the difference between a clever man and an idiot, between the learned and the ignorant, comparing them to a good and a bad mirror. The object is the same, but reflexion in the one is clear, in the other confused, the difference not being in the object but in the mirror.

“On this subject the priest remarked: ‘Do not you believe in a paradise and in a hell, the one to reward the just, the other to punish the wicked? Well, then, here are two people, a just man and a sinner. They die the same moment. The body is burnt to ashes. How can the soul if it is one and the same in both, have at the same time paradise and hell for its portion?’ The Brahmin Somappa repeated this argument for the benefit of the whole assembly, but tried to carry his point by saying: ‘There are some who hold that there is no other hell and no other paradise than the pains and the joys of this life.’ The priest replied: ‘I shall not stop to refute an opinion which would sap the very foundation of all religion: You Brahmins at

least cannot hold such a perverse idea. You know that your Vedas teach a different doctrine. Do you not read there: 'If thou pardon my sins, I shall take possession of glory.' And in another place, speaking of those who have renounced everything to consecrate themselves to God, is it not said: 'They go to the paradise of Brahma to enjoy immortality.' It is clear therefore that you believe in a place beyond this world where the just shall receive reward for their virtue.' There was no answer to this, and the Brahmin, after a few conventional civilities, withdrew.

"The new Christian community of Bukapuram has increased very much during the last two years, amongst others, by the family of the Tumnavāru Reddies, who were partly the founders of the Manddigubba church.

"It is now some years' since the chief of that family, being violently tormented by the devil, was perfectly cured as soon as Father Le Gac administered baptism to him. He did not, however, survive this grace very long. A death so soon after is a terrible trial for the neophytes in India, but they adhered nevertheless firmly to the faith. Since that time this family has increased to the number of nearly two hundred and become exceedingly rich.

"These Reddies lived at Alumuru, which belongs to Anantapur. They were reported to the Mah-rattas as being very wealthy. Mādhu Railu, a

1. About 20 years, the first having presumably been baptized in the year 1715. See page 126.

Mahratta Brahmin, at the head of a flying column laid siege to the town. These Reddies, who were the holders and masters of this town, relying on the assistance of the prince, resolved to defend themselves, and, making a soldier of every inhabitant, held out for three months. They did not lose a single Christian, whereas the enemy lost a great number of their army. However, as the Mahrattas were determined not to recede, the head of the Reddies went to Anantapur to expose to the prince the critical state of their citadel. The prince, in recognition of their bravery, supplied the Reddy with arms and had him led in triumph through the town on his own elephant. But, instead of affording the necessary help, the prince abused the Reddy's confidence and forced him to sign a bond for six thousand piasters.¹

"Immediately on his return to Alumuru he called his brothers together, and told them of the crying and shameful vexations their wealth exposed them to even on the part of the prince, whereupon they all agreed to return to Bukapuram,² whence they had formerly emigrated. The execution of this resolve was not an easy one. The number of their cattle, their various goods and chattels, their money and jewels, and, above

1. "Pistoles" = varahālu = piasters = Rs. 4.

2. Bukapuram in the north of the Venkatigiri Rajah's territory, Nellore Dt. There is now nothing left of that once flourishing village except the ruins of a few houses and graves of the Christians. The old catechist at Bandavelligantla, Shantappa, could still point out a patch of the foundation in chunam of the church and dwelling of the priest.

all, the large number of children, made the march perilous and embarrassing. To escape being observed by the enemy, they left at dead of night. The departure was made in the greatest silence so that not one of their suite was discovered.

“A short time after, the prince of Anantapur coming to hear of their departure, sent a deputation after them to induce them to return to his state. But these negotiations having failed, he despatched others with a company of soldiers to enforce compliance. They arrived, however, too late. The Reddies had gone beyond the prince’s territory. Before starting on their journey they had made a vow to build a church at their own cost if they escaped the vigilance of their enemies and succeeded in obtaining suitable lands in the new territory. The journey was peacefully accomplished—a distance of 80 leagues,¹—and they arrived at Bukapuram with their numerous families without the least molestation. The prince² gave them at first a farm of his own demesne, and later on, other villages, the most important of which is the one not far from the church of Arikatla.³

“This new church, which is a day’s journey from Bukapuram, is the work of a Christian named Ponna-

1. 80 leagues = about 240 miles. A journey across the Cambam hills must in those days have been one of danger and difficulty. It was the country of tigers and highway robbers. The former abound there still.

2. Of Venkatigiri, Nellore Dt.

3. Batsala Kurapadu. A Jesuit Priest lies buried at Ped-Arikatla.

pati Rayappa. He was at Bukapuram when the church was under construction. He carefully studied the principles of the Christian religion and, seeing the truth, he embraced it and was baptized. On returning to his town he had to stand the brunt of all sorts of opposition, especially on the part of Papi-Reddy, who was its governor¹. His first care was to gain over his own household, in which, with the aid of a catechist, he succeeded without much difficulty. It was a harder task to persuade Papi-Reddy. But in this effort also he was successful after some time. He obtained his consent for the erection of a church and to have a missionary in their midst.

“Father Gargam having been appointed came to Arikatla to confer with the governor. This town has about five or six thousand inhabitants. The devil, in whose honour the governor was just then building a temple, feared competition from a God so powerful as that of the Christians. The Brahmins, who already had been setting him up, now at the arrival of the priest, redoubled their efforts. Father Gargam was much perplexed to find that the man had changed his mind. Beyond a few words of respect, no answer could be got from him. Seeing that entreaties were futile, the priest asked the governor why he had sent for him at all. Was it proper for a man in his position to make a fool of a priest who, as ambassador of the true God, resents to see the enemies of his religion

1. Reddy or village Munsif.

triumph over him; for a treatment of this kind would reflect on the great Master who sent him. "This great God," he added, "has commanded us to shake the dust of our shoes on those who refuse to receive us." He was in the act of executing this order, when the governor, getting frightened, stopped him, and, changing his tone, willingly consented. Even Ramanna the Brahmin, who was the leader of the opposition, was so overcome by the priest's threat, that he not only agreed to the demand, but spontaneously offered to superintend the construction of the church.

"These two churches being near to each other are mutually helpful in the spread of the faith. That of Bukapuram soon counted more than two hundred Christians, and, with the arrival of the Reddies of Maddiguba, that of Arikatla is quite a settled community.¹ Converts are already coming in. Curiosity attracted a goldsmith, Lingaite, to the new church. He had long discussions with the catechist, and Father de la Johannie, judging from his conversation that he quite appreciated the Christian truth, instructed and baptized him. God blessed the Father's efforts. The goldsmith there and then placed the lingam at his feet. A sudden conversion of this kind in India is something like a miracle. Of all the pagans there is not a people so opposed to Christianity as those of this abominable caste.² Regis, which is the name of

1. Including Batsalakurapadu, etc.

2. Presumably meaning the *sect* of lingaites.

this neophyte, has on more than one occasion given proof of his firmness in the faith by withstanding the manifold persecutions on the part of his relatives.

“A still more remarkable conversion took place in the case of another Lingaite. A pagan, who had picked up some religious truths by listening to the instructions given by the catechists, talked one day to a Lingaite in a spirit of mockery about the Christian religion. ‘They are,’ he said, ‘wonderful people’ those Christians. They despise all our gods, and treat them as mere stones and animals. They limit a man to only one wife, and will not permit one’s neighbour’s goods to be touched, etc.” The Lingaite had quietly listened without saying a word. But when he had finished, he answered: “Well, you do tell me marvelous things. Those priests must be great men to preach a religion so sublime and so conformable to right reason. I am much obliged for the knowledge you have imparted to me. I shall forthwith go to the church and obtain further information.” And in fact he presented himself to the priest, gave up his idol,¹ was fully instructed and received baptism.

“At Bukapuram, a Christian boy, 8 years of age, happened to be at the Tsāvadi where the headmen of the village were assembled, when one of them began to ridicule the Christian religion. The child, defending himself as best he could, was asked to show his God. ‘My God,’ he replied, ‘the Creator of the universe’ is

1. Lingam.

a pure spirit. I cannot show Him, but I can show you yours ;' and so saying, he took a stone, scrawled on it a human face, and then placing it on the ground, kicked it away a good distance, saying : ' See, such are the gods you adore.' Everybody applauded the child, and the mocker walked away greatly confused.¹

"A batch of masons, whose headmen are Christians, were building a causeway for a tank at Mondikallu. A Dasary coming from Ballapuram, seeing them wear a rosary round their necks, thought, that, by virtue of his being a Samaiakādu, or chief of the Dasaries, he had a right to molest the enemies of his gods. He first began by quarreling, then used threats and finally forbade them drawing water. 'What,' said they, 'we are repairing this tank, and you would forbid us drinking the water.' They laid a complaint before the governor,² who is a relative of the rajah, with the result that the Dasary got a severe reprimand and the Christians were offered betelnut.

"These same men being employed by a Brahmin 'ministre d'états,' to repair a tankbund, stored away some idols (which the pagans used to place near the tanks) in the mud behind the stonework. The Brahmin having come to inspect the work, and observing that the idols had disappeared, said : 'What has become of our gods?' 'I do not understand what you mean," answered the headman. 'I have used

1. This incident is found as an example in an old French explanatory Catechism.

2. Village munsiff.

some stones lying about the place to strengthen the bund, but gods I have not seen.' 'What?' said the Brahman, 'you did not know that those are our gods?' 'Well,' replied the mason, 'I ought to understand my own work better than any of you; I can assure you they were stones. But, as you insist they are gods, they will certainly know how to reoccupy their former position.' Another Brahmin coming up, asked: 'Why do you dispute with these people, they are Christians who loathe our gods.' Fortunately the matter had no further serious consequence.

"I now finish, Reverend Father, this long letter with the sad news of the death of Father Lavernhe, whose excessive labours have cut short his career three years after his arrival in this mission. Joined to a great piety his fervent zeal would not permit him to moderate his arduous fatigues in a mission which even for the robust is most laborious and difficult. He is the first missionary who has given St. Ignatius's exercises to the catechists and to the Christians. His church counted the greatest number of baptisms. The care he bestowed on the conversion of the heathens, on the instruction of the neophytes, his incessant journeys, the celebration of the different feasts and the fervour which marked his whole ministry, soon brought his sacrifice to a happy consummation. It was already too late when he left for Pondicherry. The remedies applied could no more stay the course of the disease. But they served to prolong life as a disposition for a precious death by sentiments such as

only the predestined may taste of and which leave in this mission an odour of sanctity for many years to come.

I have the honour to be, &c."

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

From Father Calmette,

To Father de Tournemine.

Venkatigiri in the Carnatic, 16th September, 1737.¹

"I agree with you, Rev. Father, that it would have been very desirable, if the original books of the religion of India had been more carefully consulted. But till now we did not possess these books. Moreover, for a long time it was considered impossible to obtain them, especially as regards the four vedas which are the principal ones. It is only five or six years since, having been charged with the collection of oriental books for the Royal library, I have been able to procure some manuscripts treating on religion, the most important of which are the four vedas or sacred books.

"But these books are in more than one sense so to speak, sealed for us. The most erudite scholars only half understand them. The Brahmins fear explaining them to us lest they get into serious trouble with their caste. Besides, having been written in a more ancient language, Sanskrit, the language of the learned, has so far not offered a key. We find, however,

1. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.*, VIII, p. 1.

some texts, taken from their theological books, explained, and can, with the help of Sanskrit, be understood ; more especially those taken from the last books of the vedas, which, differing in language and style, are posterior to the first by more than five centuries.

The Brahmins, however, contend at one time that their vedas are eternal, at other times that they are anterior to the creation. But I have over and over again proved to these doctors from the very texts of the vedas that they are posterior to the creation. Particularly from this text : ‘There was a time that the world did not exist. Then it became being. It is the soul that formed it, and hence the work is called good (*Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum*).’ By the soul they mean, ordinarily speaking, God. Because for them it is the universal soul which animates all bodies.

“With regard to the idea of God, which the Indians in their subsequent philosophical systems are always confounding, it cannot be denied that on this point they were favoured with great light and are therefore to be classified with those, of whom St. Paul says, “who, having known God, have not glorified him as God.” (Rom. I, 21). So much so, that one is astonished to find that authors, after speaking so well of God, should wander off into a chaos of the grossest absurdities, or that, just after emerging from the densest darkness of paganism, they should be capable of throwing such pure and sublime lights on the divinity.

“Hardly a month ago, when speaking to one of these doctors on the attributes of God, on His

knowledge and love, which are the foundations of the Trinity, he raised the objection to there being qualities in God. I answered that with regard to God it is His manner of being, His perfections, and not accidents as is the case with creatures. But, said he, is perfection not a thing quite distinct from the person who possesses it? You therefore admit a union between perfection and being, which destroys the simplicity of God, whose nature is one and not composed or multiple. I answered that perfection in God or His acts is not something different from God Himself,—that, for instance, the wisdom of God is God. He saw that my answer was satisfactory, and, without insisting any further, he went on to enlarge on this idea by saying that perfection in God exists after the manner of God himself. It is therefore not necessary for me to cite Indian authors to prove that they know God. You can judge from this how well they do.

“I even go so far as to say that the Indian philosophers can easily know the Trinity. There is a sect less known here than in the north, which admits in God knowledge and love. To this sect belong those who admit distinctions in God and are called by a name to express it, in opposition to that of the “Vedantulu,” who reject these distinctions on the ground that this knowledge and love are nothing else but God himself; without perceiving that both the one and the other have reason on their side, and that the truth lies in the union of both these opinions.

There are even some allusions to a Trinity in their books, comparing it to a lamp with three jets of light and to a flood whose waters separate in three different branches.

“What I find the most remarkable and surprising in that line is a text from the ‘Lamarastambam,’ one of their books. It begins thus: ‘The Lord, the good, the great God, in His mouth is the Word.’ (The term made use of personifies *that word*). It further speaks of the Holy Ghost in these terms: *Ventus seu spiritus perfectus*, and winds up with the creation, attributing it to one sole God. It is God, it says, who made the world. This at least seems to me the meaning of the text. I shall again examine it and not fail to send it to you.

“Since August of the year 1736, the famine, which is still raging, has desolated the land and caused a great mortality. It was a great consolation to me in the midst of all these troubles to have baptized two thousand two hundred and forty two (2242) Indians, most of whom were children about to expire. The other missionaries have similarly, each in his district, baptized a great number.

“I am, etc.”

LETTER

From Father Saignes,

To Madame de Saint Hyacinthe,

Urseline at Toulouse.

Attipakam in the Carnatic, 3rd June 1736.¹

“Madam,

.....

“I am living at 12 miles distance from the hill on which is situated the famous citadel called Carnata, which has given its name to the whole country. My church stands at the foot of a long range of hills from which tigers used to descend in great numbers devouring men and beasts. The heathens have remarked that since a church was built to the true God they are no more seen.

“I have a second church at Arcot which counts over four thousand Christians. It is a large Moorish town, considered to be twenty-one miles in circuit, but the number of inhabitants is not commensurate with its extent. It is the ordinary residence of the Nabob. A Nabob is a Viceroy appointed by the Mogul Emperor. These Viceroys have more power than the ordinary run of Viceroys in Europe.

“I have a third church at Vellore, which is another Moorish town of importance and is the residence of a Nabob different from the Nabob of Arcot. There is a strong citadel with double fortifications

1. *Lett. Ed. et*, c. VIII, p. 4. Only those parts which are of present interest are given.

and large moats always full of water, in which crocodiles are kept to prevent the enemy crossing them. Condemned criminals have no sooner been thrown in than they are torn to pieces and devoured by these cruel animals. This citadel was constructed by the old Mahratta kings. It has a magnificent temple which is now part of the Nabob's palace.

At a day's journey from Vellore towards the north, I have a fourth church built in a forest, the trees of which are very curious. They are extremely high, very straight and devoid of all branches'.....

The idea which Brahmins have of their own superiority rests on the fact that they believe, and make others believe, that they are born of the head of Brahma. Some pretend to be themselves Brahma.This much is true that those Brahmins who make themselves equals to their false gods, perfectly resemble them in their knavery and profligacy.As soon as I had arrived in my little house at Vellore, the Nabob sent me the "battiam" which is food for the day, consisting of one measure of rice, half a measure of peas, some butter, and four pieces of copper money of the value of a "sou," to buy pepper, salt and wood. He continued this during the 15 days of my stay.²

1. Then follows a long and detailed discription of the palmyra tree and its usefulness, as well as a few unimportant incidents.

2. The priest had been called by the Nabob to settle some differences among the Christians.

The Nabob holds the Christians in great esteem. He has a company of 25 Christians who constantly take turns as sentinels at his palace. He is always ready to protect us against the oppression of pagan princes. There are a great many Christians among his troops, who never omit to assemble on Sundays even in time of war.

A detachment of the Moorish army was sent to destroy a village of the enemy. Most of the villagers fled in all directions. Among them was a woman who was held up by a Moorish soldier. He robbed her of her necklace and bangles and was on the point of despatching her with his sword, when, falling on her knees, she begged him to spare her life in the name of the true God. A Christian soldier, close by, hearing this, asked her if she was a Christian, to which she replied in the affirmative. Not content with having her life spared, she pleaded for the safety of the church, saying that the Priest was away on circuit. The Christian soldier ran at once to the general's camp to ask for his protection of the church. This general, who is as favourable towards us as the Nabob of Vellore, forthwith sent orders to hoist his flag at the church, which was thereby saved from the general plunder and fire.....

The great calamity with which for the last two years the whole of the Carnatic has been visited, has carried off a great number of old Christians. During the whole of these two years not a single drop of rain

fell. Wells, tanks and most of the rivers were perfectly dry. Rice and other grains had been set fire to during the war. It was quite common for these poor people to go one or two whole days without tasting food. Whole families left their homes and lived in the woods to support their lives like animals on fruits, leaves, herbs and the roots of trees. Those who had children sold them for a measure of rice. Others who found no purchasers, seeing them die with hunger, abbreviated their sufferings by administering poison...

.....

Arear is a large town where the famine made most havoc. There also great fervour was shown to obtain rain from heaven. The Nabob donned in the habit of a Fakir, bareheaded, his hands tied with a chain of flowers, and dragging a similar chain at his feet, went in great state to the mosque, followed by all the grandees of his court dressed in the same fashion, to implore Mahomed to send down rain. His prayers were, however, not heard and the drought kept on in all its severity. Some time after, a famous penitent, whom the pagans looked upon as one who could do wonders, covered himself from head to foot with his own blood in the presence of a great concourse of people, slashing himself all over the body with a sharp knife, confident of abundant rain. He was, however, not more successful than the Nabob. Again, some four months afterwards, a chief among the Fakirs had himself buried in the ground up to the neck, and resolved not to stir till the rain should come down. He

passed two days and two nights in this awkward position calling on the prophet at the top of his voice. But he lost patience and got himself disinterred on the third day, without having fulfilled his promise of procuring plentiful rain.....

The biggest serpent I have so far seen is the one dedicated to a temple. It has the thickness of a man's body and a length in proportion. He is regularly fed with offerings of sheep, birds, eggs and other such like food placed on a hillock, where it devours them at once with avidity. When it has had its fill of these offerings, it retires into a neighbouring wood consecrated to this monster. As soon as he perceived me, he lifted himself a yard high, and, keeping his eyes steadily on me, he inflated his neck hissing at a fearful rate. I signed myself with the sign of the cross and ran away for all I was worth. This is the god adored in a special manner in this pagoda. Some believe that he supports the world on his head. Others imagine that Vishnu is seated on him when he is carried through the sea of milk.....¹

We then turned to the right towards the north. From an elevated ground running along the whole length of the tank, which lies in the middle, we obtained an admirable view of a magnificent row of columns open on all sides, with a ceiling of beautifully carved stone. There are 900 such columns or pillars, each one cut from one stone twenty feet high. They are all

1. In the course of a long description of the magnificent temple at Tirunamallei he winds up as above.

well carved, representing gods fighting with giants, and several sporting gods and goddesses. It is altogether an immense work. It is here that the pilgrims, who come from all parts of India, pass the night. Behind this colonade, about fifty yards farther down, is a row of lodgings. Here live a great number of Brahmins, of Andis, of Sanyasis, of Sacrificers of the temple, of temple guards, of musicians, of songsters and dancing-girls, women of low morals, who nevertheless are honoured with the name of maids of the temple or maids of the gods. Last year these latter had a funny experience.

The Moorish governor of this town informed these persons that he wished to give a feast on a day appointed, at which he expected they should all be present, and added that they would be liberally rewarded if they would present themselves in their best and most graceful attire. Twenty of them, dressed in their best silks and decked with precious jewels, appeared on the day appointed. Golden chains, necklaces, ear-pendants, rings, bracelets of diamonds and pearls, nothing had been forgotten.

At the end of the feast the governor invited them into a hall, where he followed them with four of his officers, and then shut the door. Having asked them to range themselves in rows according to the order of their seniority, he addressed them as follows: "Ladies, you have danced magnificently, but I think you would dance still better and with lighter step if you were to

divest yourselves of the weight of all these useless ornaments." And then turning to the first: "Will you please set the example?" She had to obey, and putting down her jewels, was led out by the door. The others having followed suit, the governor very civilly had them all conducted back to their quarters. The Moors look upon the natives as their slaves and have no scruples in appropriating their goods when an occasion presents itself. The Koran permits this in the pagan countries they have conquered.....

I was called to administer the sacraments to a sick person at Vellore. Notwithstanding the Nabob's protection, we can only enter that town by night and even then with all necessary precaution. As soon as I had reached my little house, I sent word to the Christians who came at once. I heard their confessions till midnight. Then I stretched myself on my mat intending to say mass at three o'clock. But I had scarcely slept an hour when I was suddenly called to see the patient. He was very low; hence I at once aroused the people and began mass. After communion I administered Holy Viaticum. The happy man expired after mass.....

I remain respectfully, etc.

LETTER

From

Père Possevin to Madame de Saint-Hyacinthe,
*of the 4th and of the 16th Dec. 1743.*¹

Madam,

The peace of our Lord.

Before entering into the Telugu mission I had the pleasure last year of informing you to what field the good God had destined me. It is from this mission I am now writing. Counting the distance we travelled we are about 300 miles from Pondicherry. I had no idea I should be bringing in my train all the scourges from heaven. You can judge, madam, from what I here relate. The day I arrived at Pondicherry from Karikal, on my way to this mission, the Nabob of Arcot was assassinated at Vellore, which aroused the Moors and caused great divisions among them; civil war broke out, which delayed our departure for three weeks. Leaving on the 9th, we thought to reach this place² without trouble. Everything went alright until we got within 12 or 15 miles of Arcot. Here, in a mountain pass, we were attacked, Father de Lacour and myself, by an outpost of about 150 or 200 soldiers, who guarded the pass against the Mahrattas, and despoiled us of all we possessed. Our loss amounts to about 100 livres. About 4 or 5 miles

1. *Lett. Ed. et Cur.* VIII p. 239. From the context it is clear this letter was written at Krishnapuram.

2. Presumably Krishnapuram.

from this place we sought shelter in a village, where we, without supper, passed the night under a tree, surrounded on all sides by robbers, with the stars for our canopy. The following day, Sunday the 16th, we proceeded to Peracur, a distance of about 12 miles. We said Mass in our church and remained there till the 19th in constant fear and apprehension. Recommending ourselves to Providence, we decided at last to continue our journey. On the 20th we safely reached Punganur, the first church in the Telugu country, 160 miles from Pondicherry. We stayed there six days with Father Lavour, who had been, one may say miraculously, cured of an abscess on the knee, on the eve of the feast of St. Francis Xavier. On the 29th we arrived at Ballapuram, where I remained with Father Pons to learn the language, intending to proceed to Krishnapuram about the beginning of March. But God disposed otherwise, as you will gather from the sequel.

In January the army of the Nizam, who is the Minister of the Mogul, on their way to the siege of Trichinopoly, pillaged our church at Pendicallu¹ and devastated the country. Shortly after, the Nabob of Kurnool revolted against the Nizam, posted himself there, took possession of our house and its surroundings plundering and destroying the whole place, so that our Christians were forced to seek refuge elsewhere. In February the Nizam's army pulled down

1. In the south.

our church at Kambaladinne¹. The Fathers Martin and Cordey saved themselves from being captured by flight to this place.² After the departure of the Nabobs, who with all their troops have followed the Nizam in his expedition against Trichinopoly, the petty princes of the country began to wage war one against the other. In consequence of which our church at Maddigubba was pillaged. That village and its whole neighbourhood has become a desert, so much so that not a soul remained. In the month of March, whilst all this took place, Father de Lacour sent word³ not to move as the roads were unsafe. His own town was on the point of being besieged, and he had packed all his things ready to betake himself somewhere in safety. This prevented my leaving before the 30th of April, and I did not arrive here⁴ till the 2nd of May.

Since then these troublous times have continued and increased, so that I have not been able to leave the church or go anywhere for seven months.

Sidosi,⁵ a kind of prince or viceroy of the Mahrattas, has advanced with two thousand horse within a distance of two days' journey from here, where he is

1. Near Nossam in the Kurnool Dt., about five miles from Onteddupalle.

2. Krishnapuram presumably.

3. From Krishnapuram. Fr. de Lacour had gone in advance.

4. Krishnapuram.

5. Siddoji Rao, the father of Morari Rao of Gooty. Like others of that family he bore the title of Hindu Rao. A local tradition at Hindupur has it that this town was founded by him and called after his family title.—*Gazetteer of Anantapur*, p. 170.

plundering and destroying all he can. His son, the governor of Trichinopoly, after giving up the town, has come up with the two thousand horse left him, to assist his father in ransacking the country. A few days ago he was within 15 or 20 miles from here. Three or four times during the day and the night people came to advise us to retire within the fort with our belongings. We have packed the church ornaments so as to get them carried over in case of necessity. Meanwhile we remained where we were, awaiting events.

Add to all these disasters the want of rain. A number of poor are thrown on our hands, whom we are unable to assist. The mission supplies the missionary annually with a hundred pagodas (eight hundred livres), and this is independent of the common and private alms sent to us from France. We are four in this part of the mission. Each one of us has this year expended about sixteen hundred livres, and we are still up to our necks in want. So that, we are unable to send out men to announce the Gospel to the heathens.¹ It is true the times are unfavourable. Every one's mind is bent on how to save himself and to keep life going. We have a debt here of five to six hundred livres, without knowing how we shall pay it. To make matters worse, four of our disciples, who had gone to accompany Father Martin to Pondicherry, were, on their return, massacred on the 26th Sept. about

1. Without money no catechists can be had.

eighteen miles from Punganur. They were bringing us five or six hundred livres, provisions, our letters from France, arrived by the last vessels, and apparently some boxes with rosaries and other articles from Europe. All and everything was lost. I have now given you in a general way all that concerns us in this part of the mission. Things have not been much better on the Punganur and Venkatigiri side. In fact, I believe, it has been worse. You will be able to judge from the little we have gathered from one of the Fathers, who was a witness of it all in the neighbourhood of Venkatigiri. In February last, seven hundred Mahratta horse, coming from Vellore, plundered and devastated that country. Two of our people, on their way to Pondicherry, were held up but released again. This was only the beginning of the trouble in that region. The Nabob of Kolala having gone with his troops to join the Nizam, the ryots, unable any longer to bear the insults to which they were daily exposed, revolted, burnt and plundered the country. This was a second scourge. The Roisavarus (? caste of professional thieves) now set their "trade" going: and this was the third scourge, which lasted even longer than the second. Still greater misery resulted from a fourth misfortune, in that the prince of Venkatigiri, and the minor "lords" among the Moors, took up arms, plundered the land each on his own behalf, and confiscated everything they could lay hold of. The Trichinopoly garrison passing through that way, may be called the sixth scourge.

In the midst of all these troubles, Father Lavaur, at the risk of being plundered and murdered at any moment, travelled in the beginning of May from Punganur to Ballapuram and back. He returned safely to Punganur the very day that our people were murdered eighteen miles from that place. After this he proceeded to Venkatigiri, whence he wrote to us on the 29th October, saying he saw no means of leaving for a place of safety elsewhere before the arrival of the Nizam's army, which had already advanced to within 36 miles, and that if he did not succeed in escaping, he was resolved to throw himself at the feet of the Nizam to demand his protection and to request that justice might be rendered us for the murder of our people. Since that time we have not heard from him, nor from Fathers Martin and Pons, who must have left Pondicherry for this country about the end of October, which causes us great anxiety.

The Tamil country has not enjoyed more peace than we. There also their troubles have begun. Our Fathers at Pondicherry were obliged to take to flight before the arrival of the Nizam's army. They were then in their respective churches. Father de Montjustin was stripped and robbed by the Nizam's troops, and his church at Attipakam looted. He succeeded in escaping on his horse by bribing a Moorish officer with eight pagodas, having just enough clothes left to cover his nakedness. The plunder of that church means a loss of eight hundred livres. I have also been informed that one of our people, who had

with him twenty pagodas, was robbed. We have not had any further particulars about it. The roads have been for the greater part of the year unsafe, and our letters, detailing our misery and woe, remained mostly unanswered. This year we had here no more than thirty-eight to forty baptisms, and from fifty to fifty-two last year. At Ballapuram they had sixty or sixty-two. Father Lavaur has baptized within the last twelve or fifteen months between seventy and eighty adults at Venkatigiri. We had the greatest hope of a plentiful harvest, but those troubles have dispersed the flock together with the catechumens. Father Costas informs me that, notwithstanding the troublous times, he has baptized at Pushpagiri seventy adults. The only consoling item I can give you is what Father Tremblay told me when I passed through Pondicherry, namely, that on an average he had baptised every year about two hundred and fifty souls, and that, during the two years' famine, he and his catechists and some of the Christians had regenerated in the waters of baptism over three thousand heathen children and dying adults, whom he found sufficiently instructed; that, moreover, he heard yearly from ten to twelve thousand confessions and baptized from five to six thousand children of Christian parents. He has written this year a report with full particulars, which you are sure to find in the next publication. Father Saignes also, no doubt, will give you a detailed account of all that has come to his notice.

For my part, I must limit myself to these few lines, which, I fear, will give you little consolation. But as you are our mother, it is only right that we, your children, should keep you informed of how we are situated, so that you can sympathise with us and share our misfortunes. Still I can assure you that all this is but the least of my troubles. However hard and austere our lives, however great these misfortunes, it is all nothing compared to other crosses we have to bear. Recommend us, therefore, specially to our Lord, me in particular who remains with profound respect, &c....

P. S. Wishing to be exact in my communications, I add these few lines as a corrective of what I said regarding the Tamil country. The twenty pagodas, which were robbed somewhere near Carvepondy, were returned. The Church of Attipakam was not plundered by the Nizam's troops, who did not enter that place; but Father Montjustin's vestments and costly ornaments, which had been packed in a large trunk, were robbed when being transported into a place of safety. The Father was not stripped, but received a blow from a sword in the side, which was fortunately warded off by his belt and clothes. He himself made good his escape at the expense of his box and the eight rupees bribe. That country has not suffered much from the Nizam's army, which seems to have kept strict discipline. They did not plunder except in the enemy's country. I learned these particulars from Father Martin who arrived here safely on the 13th.

LETTER

From,

Father Tremblay, Missionary in the Carnatic
Kingdom to Monsieur.....¹

SIR,

The interest which you are pleased to take in all that concerns me, imposes on me the obligation of keeping you informed about all that has passed in India from the time it has pleased Providence to call me to this mission.

I arrived in 1734. The sight alone of the labour and of the manner of life our missionaries are leading made me think my days would not be many. All one can possibly imagine as to the arduousness of our task is nothing compared to the dangers, the fatigues, the excessive heat and the thousand and one inconveniences of these countries. But the grace of God makes everything easy. On the other hand, what a consolation it is to the evangelical labourer to witness the fervour of the new Christians, to see the true God adored in this heathen land, Jesus Christ acknowledged as the Redeemer of all nations, and the faith triumph over idolatry. For, such marvels, whatever calumny may say to the contrary, have been wrought and are being wrought every day before my eyes. Yes, the Christians in India adore God in spirit and in truth. Their worship is without admixture. Their aversion to idols borders on the scrupulous. They will often not

1. *Let. Edif. et Cur.*, VIII, p. 104.

even look at them or pass in front of their temples, nor touch anything that appertains to pagan ceremonies. Neither hunger, thirst, persecution, not even deprivation of their goods, will make them waver. As a symbol of their faith they generally wear a cross on their foreheads, and the one name they give to idols is that of devil.¹

In this respect the Christian soldiers are specially remarkable. They never appear before the prince without some Christian mark. One day four hundred of these good men were assembled at the gate of the palace. The prince, being in an angry mood, spoke and said: "Why do you despise my deities and call them by the most odious name?" "Lord," said one of the captains, "since we became Christians we do not wear a false mark. We know the truth and cannot help calling these things by their right name." The Prince smiled and said: "I have always known you to be faithful subjects, but henceforth you must not come near my temples, you might kill my gods and if my gods were dead, I would either have to adore the god of the Christians or worship nothing." From that time, when any pagan feast is celebrated in the palace, the soldiers leave the precincts and go out for a walk in the fields. This prince was formerly the greatest enemy of Christianity. Afterwards better and more reasonable sentiments prevailed. Since many years he always shows me marks of respect,

1. Surely this ought to silence Mannuci's reckless and unwarrantable statement that the Jesuits made only converts in name.

and when he sends me his salutations, he always adds a request for my prayers.

It cannot be gainsaid that the Christians of India have to suffer more frequent and severe trials than those of other countries. Up till now I have seen among them nothing but continual misery and affliction. I cannot enter into particulars of all the evils I have been witness of. Suffice it to say that I have seen a repetition of what Sacred History relates as to the siege of Samaria and Jerusalem.

At the commencement of the drought the princes, the lords and the ministers having carried off all the rice kept in reserve in the towns and villages, the people were reduced to the last extremity. The merchants raised the price of grain so high, that none but the very rich could buy. A measure of rice or grain, which is barely sufficient for a day's food, was sold for a gold fanum, that is to say, at eighteen "sous" of our money. The situation was desperate. The dried up fields looked like a desert of burning sand. No grass, no water in the tanks, the cattle soon perished. If wells were dug for drinking purposes or to cultivate a few patches of rice, the brackish water of these wells caused more people to die, than the rice produced was able to preserve. The unfortunate Indians, void of all resource, left their villages and wandered about in the forests and on the mountains in search of roots, leaves of trees and insects,—food which only accelerated death. Pagans and Christians

were subject to the same afflictions. But with what difference did they bear their sufferings! The pagans, furious and in despair, not unfrequently threw themselves from the height of rocks, or down into a well, or on pyres, whereas the Christians, like saints, bore up with their sufferings. They blessed the hand of the Lord, who struck, because He loved. They practised the greatest forbearance and put their trust in God's goodness and mercy.

During the first months of this terrible famine, the Christians, having still some grain left for their sustenance came one and all to the church. I confessed four thousand five hundred of them.¹ They were, however, soon unable to attend, and I began visiting them from village to village, to administer the sacraments and give whatever spiritual help I could to the suffering members of Jesus Christ. I cannot recall to my mind the fearful state to which my neophytes were reduced, without the deepest sorrow. I saw them die at confession and during mass, others dropping dead in the act of trying to put a few grains in their mouths. I have seen mothers dead still holding in their arms a living child; multitudes of people dying with the names of Jesus and Mary on their lips. In the fields, in the woods, on the roads, in the streets, everywhere one's eye met nothing but absolute misery. I could distinguish the Christians by the sign of the cross on

1. This priest alone had therefore from about seven to eight thousand Christians: and that, within 40 years since the opening of the Carnatic Mission.

their foreheads or by their beads. As soon as they saw me, they would revive, and in their piety exert whatever strength was left to them to receive the sacraments and die contented at my feet. To satisfy all, I should have been able, so to speak, to multiply myself and be in a thousand places at a time. I visited eleven villages in one day, and three days after, I learnt that everyone, men, women and children, all had died. At the sight of such distress nature is stirred to commiseration and calls forth tears, but faith consoles one and inspires one with joy at the thought that these fervent proselytes die so happy and in the peace of the Lord.

However, the unmerciful dispositions of the pagans augmented the sorrows of the faithful. How many cases could I report of treatment which would dishonour human nature. In truth, the pagans, solely occupied with the care of their bodies, never gave a thought to religion. Their temples were deserted, their idols without worshippers. Some, it is true, borrowing the language of the Christians, would invoke the true God. But there are idolators whose malice increases and intensifies in the midst of affliction. Such were the leaders and the governors of the people. Provided they furnish the required tribute, they are left undisturbed in their tyranny over the people. Hence many of our Christians were ill-treated, robbed, degraded, turned out of their homes and banished from their town or village. And what

was their crime? Worshippers of Jesus Christ not only in word but in their very conduct, they were a reproach to the infamy of paganism. This alone was sufficient. They were looked upon as the cause of all the evils and calamities which befell the land, and, on this pretext, they were forced to die in the forests and in the caves of rocks.

Nine miles from here there was living one of these men, who had enriched himself with the substance of the unfortunate in distress. Like the rich man in the Gospel, he was revelling in pleasure, whilst every one else was plunged in sorrow and want. One day he made up his mind to celebrate a feast in honour of his gods, and for this purpose doled out rice to the inhabitants of the place. He excluded, however, the Christians unless they would assist at the pagan ceremonies. If they refused, they had no share in his bounty. To the inducements thus held out, the head of the Christians, who had been baptized at the hands of the Venerable John de Brito, gave a resolute answer worthy of his faith and of his age: "I consider your invitation as a gross insult. We, who adore the true God—I, my wife, my children and all my relatives—we shall rather die to-day, if that must be, than accept your rice offered in the temple or assist at the ceremonies of your pretended deities, which to us are nothing more than devils. The great man, who baptized me, has been martyred by order of an Indian prince. Happy should I be if, together with my family, I could share that lot with my father in Jesus Christ."

The pagan, enraged at this reply, caused the door of the house of this generous old man to be walled in, and then, accompanied by his idols, priests, sacrificers, magicians and dancing girls, he surrounded the quarter where the neophytes lived. All means were employed to call forth the immediate wrath of the gods upon the Christians: sacrifices, maledictions, enchantments, and sorcery. Offerings were made to the idol, of rice, butter, milk, fruits, fowls, sheep; and more were promised by vow. They traced mysterious circles and letters on the wall and made holes for serpents to enter.

This turmoil was kept up for three hours, after which the assembled crowd withdrew yelling and howling with the assurance that before to-morrow the house would fall down and crush the Christians to death. Imagine the surprise of the guards, who had been placed near by to watch, when in the early morning they heard the Christians singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and calmly reciting their prayers. Thereupon more powerful gods were brought and more skilful magicians who, sure of success, now began their incantations all over again; but with no better result than the day before. A lively quarrel arose. The pagan officer set about abusing the powerlessness of the gods and their ministers. The greedy priests on their part, not yet satisfied, called him a stingy miser. There was no help for it, he had to produce more money and food for the gods. The sacrificers, overloaded with presents, now promised a speedy success

and retired for the day. The third day, just as these diabolical ceremonies were to begin again, my catechist arrived on the scene. Priests, sacrificers and all were soon dispersed, and the Christians were rescued from the hands of their enemies. The catechist, however, did not let the matter rest there. He reproached the officer with his unworthy conduct and threatened to report the same to the Moorish governor. The officer, alarmed at this, begged pardon proffering all sorts of excuses and promising for the future to treat the Christians with respect. This was all we wanted. We did not wish to ruin the man. For we knew that if an affair of the kind had been reported, the Moorish chiefs make short work of such cases. A pagan officer convicted of religious vexation is, as a rule, a lost man. They deprive him of all he has, and having his ears and nose cut off, he will be obliged to wander a beggar about the country.

Examples of such Christian fortitude, in times of so great distress, filled us with consolation and joy. We were sending to heaven, either ourselves or by the catechists and other zealous disciples, multitudes of souls. How many abandoned children or dying people received baptism! In one village alone we counted from five to six hundred. These innocent victims in crowds went to swell the ranks of the spotless Lamb. According to the report given by our missionaries and catechists, the number of these happy predestined souls during these two years of famine amounted to twelve

thousand four hundred. And how many more of whom we have no record! Two of my catechists and six Christian widows died in the exercise of this holy ministry. Moreover, be it remembered, that there is not a Christian who does not know how to administer baptism. Hence, in places where our neophytes live, it seldom happens that a child dies without the laver of regeneration.

At the end of 1737 the sky changed its brazen aspect. A little rain fell, the earth budded forth a few herbs. People began to cultivate rice and millets. The fierceness of the famine had somewhat abated. As for me, I was exhausted, more dead than alive. I retired to a village thinking I should be able to take a little repose. But the multitude of confessions I had to hear from Ash Wednesday till Easter gave me little or no rest. I passed the whole of Lent in that place. On Palm Sunday I blessed a new church which was built quite providentially and, if I may say so, by the help of the famine. In fact, as long as that scourge lasted, I daily distributed what I could among the Christians and even to the heathens. "But, my good children," said I, "you see we have no church, help me to construct one and I shall try to support you with alms." Christians and Pagans set to it with a good will. Some carried stones, others made bricks, some prepared the wood, others chunam (mortar). When my resources were exhausted and work had to be stopped, some charitable souls furnished the means

wherewith to continue the work. In fact, had it not been for the drought, this church would never have been built. It is moreover the nicest one ever constructed in the interior of India. Altogether things went on well in that place. I baptized forty-seven adults and fifty-four children, and on Easter Sunday I distributed holy communion to five hundred and thirty six persons.....¹

In the year 1739, I heard that one of our fathers on the confines of Tanjore was very ill. It is four days' journey from where I am. I left at once and found him very much exhausted. I did all I could and had the happiness of seeing him restored in a few days. During the two months I took his place in the beautiful country of Madura, I have witnessed the miraculous operations of the grace of Jesus Christ. The missionary's work there is indeed very arduous. Confessions have often to be heard all through the night and part of the morning. In the afternoon instructions are given. I have seen as many as three thousand people at Mass on working-days and from five to six thousand on Sundays and feast-days.

It has been said before, and I repeat it, that there is nowhere in the world so flourishing a mission as that of India; no other mission where the Christians furnish us with examples of virtue such as was the admiration of the early Christian Church. By

1. Then follows a little incident of the Rajah of Trichinopoly being made prisoner and showing his affections for the Christians, besides a few minor incidents.

the Indian Mission I mean the one established in the kingdoms of Madura and Mysore, in the Carnatic, on the coast, and in some of the neighbouring provinces as Travancore and Commorin ; a mission, which, notwithstanding the famine and the war, counts even now more than three hundred thousand Christians....¹

Even some Moors have found favour before God. One evening, overcome with fatigue, I halted under a tree on the bank of a tank. Having nothing to satisfy the inner man but the water of this tank, I lay down to rest. My catechist, who had been visiting the Christians of a neighbouring village, announced to me that he had met a Moor perfectly instructed in our holy religion. This was an old soldier, who, not able to follow the army, was left sick on the road and had been taken in and cared for by the Christians. He was struck by the charity of his hosts, and, seeing with what fervour and earnestness the parents instructed their children, he was convinced that they adored the true God. By thus listening to the prayers and catechism, he had learned the same without difficulty and repeated them constantly. He renounced Mahomed and his Koran with all his heart, was baptized and died a few days after. I have baptized three Moorish girls at one and the same time, who have since become models of virtuous lives.

1. Six pages containing the report of Father Trembloy's interview with "Abu Saheb," governor of Tirunamallei, and one or two unimportant incidents.

Speaking generally, the Moors here, though Mahomedans, do not seem to have much aversion for the Christian religion. Sometimes they even pay us true marks of respect. A colonel, belonging to the army of Dostalikan, Nabob of Arcot, which was encamped at a short distance from my church, being out for a ride and perceiving the church, dismounted, entered barefooted, and prostrated himself three times before the statue of the Blessed Virgin. He then went out in profound silence. Meeting me at the door he spoke to me with the greatest respect of Jesus and Mary. When leaving he gave one of the Christians a rupee to offer in his name incense to the Bibi-Maria (the great Lady Mary) and said : "From what I know and have seen of the Roman Sanyasies I have much doubt as to the truth of my own religion."

I have just been informed that a Moorish woman having conceived a high opinion of our faith, betook herself to Ballapuram, where Father Pons, after the necessary instructions and tests, administered baptism to her. She is a widow with two sons. The younger, attached to his mother, approved of her conduct. But the elder, oblivious of all filial devotion, became enraged, publicly proclaimed that his mother had deserved death for having forsaken Mahomed and the Koran, and, resolved on carrying out his threat, deliberately denounced her as an apostate. This generous woman remained, however, immovable, and replied to all inquirers that she was ready to lay down her life. When taken before the Mullah (Mahomedan priest), supreme

judge in matters of religion, she spoke so bravely of the greatness of God and of the truth of the religion of Jesus Christ, that the Mullah, being struck with admiration, took her part and gave orders that she should in no wise be molested. The elder son, full of spite and resentment, left the place for some other country. The younger is disposed and prepared to imitate his mother's example.

In 1739, unmindful of torrents and inundations, I travelled to the coast, and from there I went to meet a missionary newly arrived from Europe. Before accompanying him to the place of his destination, I took him round to all my churches. Having witnessed the fervour of these new Christians, he thanked God for having called him to labour in a country where day by day the cross is being planted on the ruins of idolatry. After passing two months with me, we crossed the terrible mountains which separate the Tamil from the Telugu country and arrived at Punganur, where we joined Father Mozac.

What a happiness for three missionaries, who ordinarily are separated by hundreds of miles, to be thus brought together! What a consolation to send up our united prayers to God, whom we have come to announce in these far-off countries, to confer with each other about the best means of advancing the work of salvation, to encourage each other in our apostolic laborus and communicate each other's views on these subjects!

The three of us started together for Ballapuram, which is about ninety miles from Punganur. There we watered with our tears the grave of Father Calmette, a most accomplished Missionary, who had died a few months before regretted by Moors and pagans in these parts of India. We then separated, and I left for Krishnapuram, where I found the Christians mourning the loss of Father Le Gac, who, after thirty-six years of missionary labour, had only lately ended his arduous course by a holy death.¹

In the month of May 1740, a Mahratta army, of more than a hundred thousand men, made a sudden incursion into the Carnatic. You will have read in letters sent from here a faithful report of these untoward events. It was in these sorrowful times after my partial recovery that I returned to my mission in the month of September. Our neophytes, roused by the fear of the Mahrattas, were actuated with even more fervour to have recourse to the sacraments, so that, from my arrival till the third of December, I administered the sacrament of Confession to over three thousand people, and Baptism to a hundred and five children and to eighty three adults.

The day after the feast of St. Francis Xavier, which had attracted an extraordinary crowd of people, I was informed that the Mahratta army was approaching and that it was necessary to put myself in safety

1. Father Le Gac's grave and those of FF. Le Caron and Ducros are still to be seen at Krishnapuram till the present day.

at once. I went out and saw the fields covered with men, women and children making for the hills. I urged the children to hasten their escape, and, having hidden some of the articles of the church, I withdrew into a neighbouring wood where I passed the night. The following day I learnt that the troops were only a mile and a half away and that the whole country was on fire. I therefore took my departure, and, across thorns and stones and hills, I reached Pondicherry in three days without having tasted food.

Towards the middle of June I risked returning to the mission. Everything was in such a deplorable state, which no words can describe. One of my churches had been burnt down, another plundered. Twenty-two villages, where lived the best portion of my flock, had been sacked; many Christians were murdered others made slaves, and the remainder compelled to wander about the woods and the hills. It is true, the enemy's army had left, but a horrible pack of robbers, made up of Mahrattas, Moors and soldiers of petty princes, were constantly ransacking the country, to lay hands on what had been left in the general destruction. For three months I had to make my visits at the peril of my life, in constant dread of falling into the hands of these horrid people. But the faith, patience and resignation of the Christians inspired me with courage in the midst of all these perils.

One day a band of these vagabonds managed unobserved, screened as they were by the mountains,

to fall upon the village of Coortampetty. It is entirely a Christian village, where I have a church and a house. The men escaped by running away, but the woman and the girls fled for safety into the church recommending themselves to God and His Holy Mother. Fearing, however, that these marauders would not spare the house of God, they hid themselves, to the number of fifty, in a small side-room of my house, locked the door, and began reciting the rosary beseeching the Mother of God to protect their honour and their lives. When the marauders had finished plundering the village, they tried the church and then entered my room. They destroyed part of the roof and in their greed searched everywhere. I cannot sufficiently thank Providence that they never thought of breaking into the room where the women were all the while trembling with mortal fear. When the rowdies had disappeared, the women came out from their hiding place weeping for joy and gratitude to God and His Blessed Mother, who had so signally rescued them and protected their womanly honour, a virtue known in this country only to the disciples of Jesus Christ.

This is not the only example I could cite of the visible assistance the Queen of Heaven extends to the Christians. A young Christian woman was being pursued by a lewd Mahratta. She tried to hide herself in the briars and recommended herself to our Blessed Lady. The miscreant would have certainly discovered

her, if not a serpent had suddenly bitten him in the foot. In a few moments he was dead, having died of blood poison. A sudden death of this sort in itself is, however, no miracle. The poison of an Indian serpent is very deadly. Between the bite and death frequently less than an hour elapses. On this account the missionaries take care to be provided with a counter-poison, which is an infallible medicine if promptly administered. Last year, hearing the cries of a catechumen near the church, I went out in all haste and found she had been bitten by a serpent. I baptized her and then ran for the medicine, but, before I was back, she had expired, be it observed, in less than a quarter of an hour after she had been bitten.

To the glory of God it must be said that as far as serpents are concerned, the missionary seems to be protected in some special manner by Providence. I have found them in my room, on my cot, on my clothes, about my feet and I have never been injured.

Once I fell asleep on my mat with my clothes on in a small apartment where we kept the Blessed Sacrament. Towards the morning when I woke, I perceived by the flickering of the little lamp that a large serpent was lying on me with its head near my throat. I made the sign of the cross, the brute slipped off on to the pavement and was killed by a confrère who came to my assistance. I must here relate another case of singular protection. One night we were travelling. About 10 o'clock, just as we were reciting our

rosary, a huge tiger came close up to us in the middle of the road, so that I could have reached him with a stick. The four Christians, who accompanied us, in their terror, cried out 'Holy Mary !' The terrible beast slowly turned away from the road, but signified to us by its manner and the grinding of its teeth that it was loath to leave so nice a prey untouched.

To the Mahratta invasion, with all its brutalities, succeeded a civil war between the Moorish lords. Sabdalarikan,¹ with whose government they were not pleased, was assassinated in the year 1742. His death was the occasion of still greater trouble. Each one tried to seize some portion and to establish himself as sovereign. Knowledge of this state of affairs having reached Delhi, Nisamulu,² who rendered himself so famous in the late revolution of the empire, came over at the head of an army of five hundred thousand men, deposed all the Moorish governors and took them prisoners. Nearly the whole country acknowledged him as the Viceroy. He remained more than seven months with his fearful army in the kingdom of Madura and in the neighbourhood of Trichinopoly. In the midst of the horrors of war the disciples of Jesus Christ had to endure an additional trial, in that they were singled out and persecuted. But God has turned it all to His own glory. In the Telugu as well as in the Tamil country, we have had more than one

1. Safdar Ali Khan.

2. The Nizam.

occasion to admire the fervour and constancy of the neophytes.

A young man, closely related to the King¹ of Venkatigiri,² having become a Christian, the enraged princess³ had the catechist thrown into prison, where he suffered great hardships in patience. The soldiers pulled out his beard, and throwing him down, dragged him over the ground in a most inhuman manner. Others pulled him up in the air and then let him drop again, so that he was well-nigh dying under this cruel treatment. When the brother of the King became aware of these excesses, he took pity on this confessor of Jesus Christ and set him free. But the ministers of the prince prohibited the Christians from entering the church unless each one paid 10 gold fanams, which is about seven lires of our money. As to the young convert, he despised the threats and promises of his relatives and would be moved neither by their allurements nor by their ill-treatment. Bound with chains and with his head shaven, he was ignominiously brought before the prince, who, exasperated at the audacity of his ministers, resolved to take his revenge, but was appeased by the prayers of this neophyte. He thereupon assigned to this young Christian an honourable place in the palace, but requested him not to leave it without his special permission.

1. Poligar.

2. N. Arcot Dt.

3. One of the ladies of the Poligar's court ; probably the wife.

Father de Lacour, who had been informed of what had taken place, came to Venkatigiri. But the prince assured him that it had all been done without his knowledge and that he had severely reprimanded the culprits. He promised to continue his good dispositions towards the Christians, and gave orders that no one should be molested on account of his religion. Sometime afterwards, young Constantine fell ill and died an edifying death. His father and mother have since received baptism, and live a Christian life after the example of their son. The church of Venkatigiri has happily seen an increase from this persecution. Several catechumens have been baptized, a great number of heathens are under instruction, and new ardour is animating the old Christians.

This, sir, is a faithful report of the principal events which have happened to my knowledge up till the year 1743. I shall give you more particulars in a following letter. I and my neophytes remain exceedingly grateful to so generous a benefactor for whom we shall not cease to pray.

I am, etc.

CHAPTER V.

Here ends this series of interesting letters, and with them, unfortunately, also all firsthand information concerning the conversion and first gathering-in of the Telugu Christians.

We have followed the pioneer Fathers in their arduous work of evangelising this rural people up to the forties of the eighteenth century, and could wish for some account of their apostleship during the next thirty years. But from this time onward there appear to be no records available.

The Society of Jesus still flourished, and its members continued their useful work in the missions unabated, at least till the end of the year 1764, when Louis XV, at the instance of Mr. Choiseul, signed the edict that "The Company of Jesus should cease to exist in France." The uncertainty of the ultimate fate of the Society must have greatly interfered with the work in the missions, and necessarily curtailed the supply of men and means. The pressure of more serious matters and the gloomy prospects of the future will readily account for the interruption of correspondence with their friends at home.

Already in 1759 the Portuguese Government had suppressed the Society of Jesus in its dominions and

issued a peremptory order requiring all Jesuit subjects to return to the mother-country. Most of the Portuguese Jesuits obeyed this strange order and set out for Goa, where they were thrown into prison. Aware of the fate of their brethren in the adjoining mission of Mysore, and the distressing reports from home becoming daily more alarming, we need not wonder at the absence of missionary news concerning their work in a mission which itself was devastated by war.

In February of 1743 the church of Kambaladinne was destroyed by the Nizam's army, and in the following month the church of Maddigubba was razed to the ground by the petty poligars, who were carrying on an intestine warfare against one another and plundering expeditions all over the country, and as we have already seen, "*not a soul was left in the neighbourhood.*" These events will explain the subsequent rapid decline of Christianity in the country of its birth among the Telugus.

Those were troublous times. Even before this date the most influential Christians, the Tumma Reddies, had emigrated to the east. Owing to political unrest throughout the country, the ever-returning vexatious plunderings of the Mahrattas, and the molestations of petty rajahs or poligars, not only the Reddies, but many of the other Christians of the Andevāru and Balāram *simas*,¹ emigrated into what is

1. Anantapur lay in the Andevāru, and Krishnāpuram in the Balāram *sima* or country.

now called the Nellore District, and we may assume that, after the famine of 1756, few were left in their original homes.

What happened in the once flourishing mission-stations situated in the territory of the Nawab of Cuddapah, we have at this date no means of ascertaining. Only incidentally the name of some town or village in that territory was given in the above letters, such as Vavēlipadu (Vayalapadu) and Kambaladinne. When, nevertheless, we consider that at the latter place two priests¹ were once working, we may legitimately infer that this must have been a mission station of some importance. We learn more-over from the diary of Bishop Bonand, who travelled and worked in these parts about a hundred years later, that Siddavatam, or Sidhôtam, had at one time a church and a resident priest. He was informed that this priest, Joachim by name, was a clever and successful physician, which gave him great influence. The Nabob of Cuddapah assigned to him the grant of Sidhôtam and of another village in recognition of a valuable service rendered him.

Here we have undoubtedly a clue as to what appears to many almost incomprehensible, namely, the conversion of that proudest of castes among the

1. Fathers Martin and Cordey, who fled to Krishnapuram when their church at Kambaladinne was pillaged by the Nizam's troops. At Onteddupalle, which is quite close to Kambaladinne, but of much later date in the order of conversion, this tradition is still alive.

Sudras, the "ill'ellani" Kammavāras,¹ the descendants of whom now form a considerable number and are a body of respectable and well-conducted Christians spread over villages in the Guntur, Nellore and Chingleput Districts.

To discover the original abode of any native whose forefathers the adverse circumstances of the times had driven from their home, offers considerable difficulty, because of his indifference to past history. This is doubly true of our Christians, who, by their conversion, more or less severed connections with their heathen relatives. It has always been a doubtful question as to when and where these Kamma Christians originally entered the fold. But now we may safely take it as proven that they were converted about the time above referred to, and that the cradle of their regenerative birth was no other than the territory over which the Nabob of Cuddapah then ruled.

The custom of secluding their women gradually falling in disuse, among the heathens as well as among the Christians, the name "ill'ellani" became a meaningless term, and hence they adopted, and are now generally known by, the name of Gandikôta Kmmas. This gives us an additional proof of the place of their original home ; for the Gandikôta *sima*,

1. "Ill'ellani," literally : "not leaving the house." They were so called because their women-folk observed the purdha system, at least to the extent of not leaving the house, which no doubt gave them a marked prestige among the Sudra castes.

or country, formed a large and important part of the Cuddapah Nabob's dominions.

Our Kamma Christians of this particular caste pride themselves on the prestige of their ancestors, and say that their fore-fathers occupied honorable positions in the employ of the Nabobs and Rajahs of by-gone days, with many of whom the first Jesuits had great influence. It is therefore easily explained how these Kammas came in contact with the pioneer Fathers and thus were brought by them into the fold.

Bishop Bonand transmits to us the tradition that the Nabob of Cuddapah made over to Father Joachim not only the grant of two important villages, but provided him with a complete staff¹ for their due administration. This must have included a number of menials such as watchmen, taliaries, peons, etc., but undoubtedly also men in higher employ, who could command respect. We are led to conclude that Father Joachim was like one of the many petty rajahs or poligars of those days, responsible only to the Nabob.

Though the pagans of this branch of Kammas, found in various parts of the country, are generally of a relatively inferior physique, the Christian Kammas, notwithstanding that they are, like their pagan fellow-castemen, taken on the whole, of a rather dark

1. Bishop Bonnard was told that Father Joachim had a hundred men under him. And this is likely true; for every independent poligar had to supply a certain number of men in time of war.

complexion, are a splendid, well-built set of people. We can therefore easily understand that the Rajahs and Nabobs of old were pleased to enlist men of so superior a type in their service.

We know, moreover, that, after their emigration, all connection with their former blood-relations was not completely severed. As recently as 60 years ago a Christian Kamma girl of Ravipadu in the Guntur District was given in marriage to a distant relative at Kottālapalle in the Gandikôta *sima*. Her sons live there still, the younger of whom having married a girl, taken from the old Christian stock, does justice to the faith of his forefathers. And, further, to remove all doubt as to the origin of these Christians, we find that some have actually discovered the direct line of their ancestral pedigree in the Cuddapah District. Pottakamuri Rajiah, a respectable inhabitant of Ravipadu, says that his mother happened, as by chance, to find out that her forefathers lived at Pārlapalle in the Kadiri Taluq of the aforesaid District, and that her great-great-grandfather, Tāminidi Subaya's son, was the first Christian in that family.

We have no hesitation to identify the woman referred to by Father Calmette¹ as the first in this caste to receive baptism. Taking the name of Annamma, she lived a devout life and induced her husband and daughter to follow her example. Father Calmette does not give the name of the caste or of the village.

1. See page 232.

We have seen that in their letters to France this was the almost invariable custom of the pioneer missionaries as being of no special interest to their friends at home ; but Father Calmette is nevertheless careful to note that this woman was the first Christian in a caste of which the women were particularly remarkable for their reserve and modesty. Besides, the name " Annamma " continued to be a favourite one in this caste, like that of Rayappa among the Reddies, because the first Christian Reddy bore that name. It may, therefore, be accepted as an incontrovertible fact that this family formed the nucleus of the many conversions of Kammas that followed, and that our Christians of the " illell'ani " -Kamma-caste originally came from the Cuddapah District.

We further glean from Bishop Bonand's diary that the Baljas,¹ now living in Mutnur, came from those parts, and hence we may conclude that the pioneer Jesuits had laid a solid foundation for the faith in those territories of which, unfortunately, the record is now so scanty. Let us hope that some day letters of that period will be brought to light, which will fill up this regrettable gap and enable us to form a better judgment of the times so far dealt with.

Here we may briefly call attention to the apparently strange fact that the French Jesuits of Pondicherry did not push their work further north towards Bellary and Raichur, but followed in the track of

1. Probably the Christians of the Pattra caste emigrated with them.

their emigrant neophytes towards the east. There is, however, nothing surprising in their having taken that course. Not only had they to attend to and continue their watchful care over their newly acquired flock, but it was precisely at this point, the outskirts of what is now the Anantapur District, that they met their brethren, the Jesuits of the Goa province, who had worked their way down to this part of the country.

The Christians of Maddikera, Ramadurgam, Adoni, Raichur, Mudgul¹ etc., were converted by the missionaries from Goa. The Christians of the Kamma caste, which goes by the name of "Gampatsātu"²-Kammavāru, were most probably brought into the fold by priests from Goa.

1. The Very Rev. Father L. Besse, S.J., of Trichinopoly, informs us that the Missionaries who worked at Mudgul, etc., were Jesuits from Goa, and not Carmelites, as is wrongly supposed.

2. "Gampa-tsātu" means "hidden by a basket," which is, as they allege, a contradistinction of "Gōda-tsātu" = "hidden by a wall," the distinctive and correct name, they say, of the so-called "ill'ellani"-Kammavāru.

In Perpetuam Memoriam.

It is but proper that at the end of this little volume we should submit a list of the names of those brave pioneers who were, and will always remain, the spiritual fathers of our Telugu Christians. Of three of these at least we know that they lie buried and await the resurrection, so to speak, in the very heart of the Telugu country.¹ Krishnapuram, now a poor and out-of-the-way village, contains their precious remains. There they lie buried under the shadow of the trees they had planted with their own hands.² This village, once one of the principal Mission-centres in the Carnatic, is situated in the northern portion of the Penukonda Taluq of the Anantapur District. There are no Christians there now.

It will be of interest to the reader to know how these graves were not only discovered, but identified as being the last resting-place of the three fathers Le Gac, Ducros and Caron.

1. Father Calmette, the Sanskrit Scholar, who followed the Christians to Bukapuram (9 miles south of the M. & S. M. Donakonda Railway station), died and lies buried at Chikkabalapuram, which is situated on the outskirts of the Telugu country in the Diocese of Mysore.

2. Six magnificent trees of this once large tamarind tope are still extant at the present day. In 1835 Mgr. Bonand counted a dozen. The land adjoining, now a rice field, bears the name of "Mattam-tota," church garden, till this day.

Bishop Bonand, who visited these parts in 1835, made his way from Dharmāvaram to Krishnāpuram with the sole object of venerating the tombs of those worthy pioneers. It was then a hundred years since they had died. He apparently knew nothing of their history, merely telling us that the structure of their tombs had fallen into ruins, but that a Christian of Dharmāvaram of the Kamsala caste, Chinnappa by name,¹ had undertaken to rebuild them in mud and stone, and that, of the church, adjacent parts of the walls were standing.

With this information of nearly another hundred years old, a request was made in the beginning of 1908 to W. J. Hughes Esqr., Collector of Anantapur, who very kindly interested himself in the matter with the happiest results, as the subjoined communication, which is of special interest, will fully bear out.

“ ANANTAPUR,
27th January 1908.

“ DEAR FATHER.....

“ The Tahsildar of Penukonda reports as follows :

“ Krishnāpuram is a small village of about a hundred houses and is situated 5 miles south of the Mukthāpuram Railway station (2nd station from the Dharmāvaram junction S. I. R.) There is to-day but one Christian family, consisting of one old woman,

1. Chinnappa's descendants have kept up this pious custom till now, as the sequel shows.

her daughter-in-law, Nārayanamma¹, and a grandson. The family belongs to the Roman Catholic faith, but has Hindu relations, and observes all the rites and ceremonies of the Hindus too. Chinnamma,² the old woman about 75, is the only person who knows anything of the Christian advent into the village. Being deaf, purblind and old, she is unable to give any details.

“Towards the south-west corner of the ruined fort of Kristnāpuram stand four graves in a tamarind tope. They are not conspicuous by any structural adornments. They look like 4 different pials close to one another, constructed of rough stones and stand parallel to one another from south to north. All are in a ruined condition. According to Chinnamma’s version, the first three alone are sacred graves, and she heard her elders say that the three Roman Catholic priests, *viz.*, Thivianadha Swamulu, Sanjivinadha Swamulu and Sourinadha Swamulu, are buried there more than one hundred years ago. The fourth grave is that of one Veerabhadrapa, the maternal uncle of Chinnamma. She says that the bodies of Christians, who died subsequently, were all buried in the common burial-ground of the village.

1. Nārayanamma having died of cholera at the end of 1908. Chinnamma, now being left without support, left the village and went to live with her relations at Pārlapalle in the Cuddapah District.

2. Only Chinnamma was a Christian, baptized at her birth and lost sight of afterwards.

"At the southern end of the three sacred graves stands a vertical pillar with a cross, and this is considered the holiest. On important occasions such as the removal of hair, marriage etc., the first ceremony is to offer cocoanuts, scents, etc., to the three graves, and the poor are fed in the tope.

"Between the fort ditch, and about fifty yards from the latter, Chinnamma says, broken walls without roof were to be seen in her youth, consisting of about 2 ankanams,¹ wherein she recollects her father used to say that "swarupams"² were kept and worshipped. The broken walls and even the flooring have now disappeared. Only two irregular patches of the plastered ground, each about 3 square yards in extent, and a trace of the base of a pillar are now to be seen. Up to 60 or 70 years ago old men say that an important annual festival used to be observed by the Christians in the tope. A priest used to attend and conduct service, and it would appear a large number of Christians from Maddikubba and Brāhmanapalle of Anantapur Taluq used to visit the village.

"Sorry there is no more information available.

"I have written to find out, if I can, something about Kambaladinne.³

Yours etc.

(Sgnd.) W. J. HUGHES."

1. The Telugu people speak of the extent of a building according to the number of beams. The space between them is called an "Ankanam."

2. Statues.

3. Kambaladinne here mentioned is in the Hindupur Taluq of the Anantapur District.

Before closing we must make a few observations on the above interesting letter.

How this historic village was entirely lost sight of for so many years is difficult to explain, except we ascribe its being forgotten to the small number and constant changes of Priests, who, besides, had other large districts to attend to. One would have thought that a man like the late Monsignor Balanader, who knew the different Telugu Mission stations thoroughly, should have been aware of its existence. Apparently he did not. He was never heard mentioning or alluding to it.¹

It is said that the second or middle of the three graves has a vertical headstone with a cross,² and is considered the "holiest." Chinnamma is quite correct as to this grave being that of Sanjivinādha. That tradition should have handed it down as the most sacred, is quite natural and in keeping with ascertained facts. Sanjivinādha Swamulavāru is a name transmitted among the Telugu Christians from generation to generation. It was he, Father Le Gac, the intrepid and indefatigable Missionary, who so zealously and successfully laboured in these parts for thirty-five long years, and it is he that converted the Yelnāti Reddies and other caste people of the Anantapur District.

1. The name of the village is still given in the Catholic Directory of 1873. But Chinnamma had not seen a Priest since her youth.

2. The little cross is roughly cut in this stone.

The other two Fathers, who lie buried by his side are Dhivianādha (Father Gilbert Ducros), and Shourinādha (Father Francis Caron.)

Most of the pioneer Jesuits, who laboured in these parts, were short-lived. They generally broke down after a few years. The mortified and abstemious lives, such as these wonderful men had adopted, to make themselves all to all to gain souls for Christ, proved in most instances fatal to their health. They succumbed to fatigue and died in the midst of their labours, when, so to speak, they had only just begun their career. Father Le Gac, on the contrary, was one of the few exceptions, being blessed with an unusually strong constitution.


Father Dominic Aubert, in a letter¹ written to the Father General, dated Carveypondy 7th October 1714, says of him : "Father Le Gac is a man of remarkable zeal and perseverance. He enjoys a *very robust health*, which he wholly devotes to the glory of God. He is of a very quiet disposition, always ready to forestall the needs of the Christians and of the other missionaries, especially of Father de la Fontaine, whose companion he is."

We are indebted to R. Morris Esqr., the present Collector of Anantapur, for his kind services in obtaining the sanction from Government for the future upkeep and protection of these graves, as well as for the

1. A copy of his letter was obtained through the kindness of the Very Rev. L. Besse, S.J., Trichinopoly.

erection of three memorial tablets. It struck the compiler of these records as a singular and noteworthy coincidence when a copy of the aforesaid sanction by Government reached him in Holy Week 1909, the very week of Father Le Gac's death at Krishnāpuram 170 years ago.

**TOMBSTONES WITH INSCRIPTIONS
AT KRISHNAPURAM.**

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Gilbert Ducros, S. J. Born at Aigueperse 26th October 1692. Arrived in India in the Beginning of 1725. Died at Krishnapuram 22nd April 1730. Locally known as Divyanadhaswami.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Etienne Le Gac, S. J. Born at Brest in Britany 23rd July 1671. Came to India in 1703. Died at Krishnapuram on Good Friday 4th April 1738 Aged 67. After 35 years of labour among Telugu people. Locally known as Sanjvinadhaswami.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Francois Caron, S. J. Born at Amiens 24th July 1687. Came to India 20th August 1718. Died at Krishnapuram 28th July 1721. Locally known as Savurinadhaswami.</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

*An Alphabetic List of the Missionaries of the
Society of Jesus, who laboured in the
Ancient Telugu Mission.*

- Andrea.**—(Francis Xavier d'), Italian, came to India 1757. In 1777 worked in the Carnatic "beyond the mountains." Died at Pondicherry 13th December 1817. Aged 77.
- Arnoult.**—(Henry)—was at Maddeiru (?) Ponganur in 1777. Brought the Telugu Christians to Chellampattida. Died suddenly at Madras 15th September 1806. Aged 67.
- Aubert.**—(Dominic)—came to India 11th October 1710. In 1723 was in charge of all the missions on this side of the Canavay mountains. In 1760 Superior of the Mission. Died.....?
- Barbier.**—(Claude Antoine)—born at Paris 29th April 1677. Came to India 1st November 1710. Was Superior of the Carnatic Mission in 1725. Died 21st November 1725 at Pondicherry.
- Baignoux.**—(Claude Philippe)—was at Arcot in 1771. Died at Pondicherry 16th July 1810. Aged 66.
- Bouchet.**—(John Venance)—founder and first Superior of the Carnatic Mission. Born 12th April 1655, at Fontemay-le-Comte, was in the Madura Mission about 1688, where in 12 years he baptised 20,000 pagans. In March 1702 left Aur at the request of Father Tachard, and started the Carnatic Mission at Takkolam near Arkonam. Died 13th March (or July) 1732.

Breuille.—(Charles de la)—was superior at Pondicherry in 1698. Attempted to work in the interior, but was compelled to return to the coast owing to ill-health.

Calmette.—(John). Born at Rodez, 5th May 1693. Came to India in 1726. Died at Chikka Ballapuram at the end of 1739 or the beginning of 1740. In his time the Tumma Reddies emigrated to Bukapuram. He was said to have been a great Sanskrit scholar. It is very probable that he is the Satyabodha Swamulavaru of the Vedanta-Rasayanam. We know at least that it is Father Calmette who got translated into Sanskrit a large "Catechism de la foi," and the refutation of Metempsychosis. The latter included "la connaissance de l'ame," which probably is the "**Atma nirnayam**" from the Tamil by Father de Nobili.

Caron.—(Francois). Born in the diocese of Amiens, 24th July 1687. Landed at Pondicherry 20th August 1718. Died at Krishnapuram a martyr of charity in attending the cholera-stricken people, 28th July 1721.

Coeurdoux.—(Gaston Laurent). Born at Bourzes, 18th October 1691. Came to India 1732. Entered the Carnatic Mission in March 1733. But could not stay owing to ill-health. Was Superior from 1744—1751. Had charge of the Sudras at Pondicherry. One of the most remarkable missionaries by his talents and virtues. He founded the Pondicherry Carmelites. Died at Pondicherry 16th June 1777. Aged 84.

Cordey.—
was with Father Martin at Kambaladinne in

February 1743, as mentioned in Father Possevin's letter of the 4th December 1743.

Costas.—(Louis). Born at Agen 1710. Came to India 1741. Was at Pushpagiri south of Vellore. Died at Mylapore 4th January 1784. Aged 74.

Cour.—(Louis de la). Was at Peracur. Died in 1750.

Courbeville.—(Maximilien de). Came to India 11th August 1710. Was with Father Manduit at Carveypondy where he died 1711, poisoned by the Brahmins.

Duchamp —(Pierre). Born at Le Puy, 7th April 1692. Came to India 1717. Was at Krishnapuram and Ballapuram in 1730. Made Superior of Bengal where he died about 1739—1740.

Ducros.—(Gilbert) Born at Aigueperse, 26th October 1692. Came to India in the beginning of 1725. Was at Krishnapuram 1726, at Maddigubba 1727. Died at Krishnapuram 22nd April 1730.

Fontaine.—(Jean Baptiste de la)... .. started the Mission at Punganur in 1702. Was Superior of the Carnatic in 1714. Had great influence with the poligars round about Krishnapuram. Died...(?)...10th November 1718.

Gac.—(Etienne le). Born at Brest, 23rd July 1671. Came to India in 1703. Was in the Telugu country till 1733. Was Superior at Pondicherry till 1737. And then returned to Krishnapuram, where he died in the night of 4th April 1738. Aged 67.

Gargam.—(Memmius René) Built a church at Venkatagiri in 1725, and another at Pedd'Arikatla. Was Superior in 1737. Died at Pondicherry, 4th December 1754. Aged 72. After 40 years in the mission.

Garofoldo.—(John), Neapolitan was at first in Mysore about 1761. Then joined

Pondicherry where he died 30th May 1801.
Aged 72.

Gibanne.—(Antoine de). Came to India in 1751. Died at Pondicherry, 16th November 1801. Aged 85.

Hubert.— Was at Carveypondi in 1727, learning the language with Father Calmette.

Lane.—(Pierre de la), or Lalanne. Born at Toulouse, 6th August 1669. Was in the Carnatic in 1705 at Takkolam. Died in 1746.

Lavaur.—(Francois Louis de). Born at Saint-Cere, 20th June 1700. Came to India in 1741. Was at Punganur in 1742. At Venkatagiri in 1743. In 1751 Superior at Pondicherry. In 1761 made prisoner by the English and taken to England. Died in June 1763 on his way to his native place.

Lavernhe.—...?...Served 3 or 4 years in the Carnatic. Owing to ill-health returned to Pondicherry, where he died 1735.

Manente.—(George), Italian was at Masulipatam in 1777 and at Oleru 1788. Brought the Christians from the East-coast to Kilachery. Died at Madras, 26th May 1812. Aged 72.

Martin.—(Jean Baptiste). Born at Toulouse. Came to India in 1728. In 1751 succeeded Father de Lavaur in the Telugu Mission. Fled from Kambaladine with Father Cordey when the Nizam's troops pillaged that church.

Mauduit.—(Pierre). Born at Poitier, 22nd June 1664. The first Missionary of the Carnatic about 1700. Was imprisoned in 1703. Baptized the first Telugu family at Punganur. Founded the

station of Yeddudurgalam. Built a church in honour of the Three Kings at Perakur. Was Superior for 7 years. Died at Carveypondy 1711 poisoned by the Brahmins.

Montjustin.—(Hyacinthe de). Born at Vesoul, 5th September 1708. Came to India 1739. Was Chaplain to the troops of Bussy. Died at Karikal, 1st Sept. 1791. Aged 83.

Mozac.—(Antoine). Born in the Diocese of Clermont, 17th December 1704. Came to India in 1735. Was at Punganur 1739. Superior in Bengal 1743—1758. Returned to Pondicherry where he died 4th December 1779. Aged 75.

Petit.—(Gilbert-Xavier). Came to Pondicherry 12th February 1702. Was in the Carnatic mission 1702—1710. Returned to France 1711.

Pons or Pont.—(Jean Francois). Born at Rodez, 6th December 1698. Was at Karikal 1726—1732. Superior in Bengal 1732, at Ballapuram 1742. Died about 1752 or 1753.

Possevin.—(Nicolas). Born at Contances 9th September 1703. Came to India in 1741. Was at Krishnapuram 2nd May 1743. Died at Pondicherry 3rd October 1780. Aged 77. (He learned the language at Ballapuram with Father Pons.)

Saignes.—(Jacques). Born at Puylaurens (Tonlouse) 17th May 1696. India 1722. Was in charge of Arcot, Vellore etc. Died at Pondicherry 1762.

Saint-Amour.—(Marie-Antoine de).....Died at Pondicherry 31st August 1803. Mgr. Champenois wrote of him: "He ended the most beautiful life by the sweetest death."

Schuendinan.—(Dominic)—was Procurator 1788. Died at Pondicherry 22nd May 1804. Aged 67. Mgr.

Champenois announcing his death said: "We have sustained a great loss."

- Tachard.**—(Guy). Born at Angouleme 7th April 1651. Came from Siam, brought Father Bouchet from Madura to found the Carnatic mission. Died 21st October 1712.
- Tremblay.**—(Jean Baptiste du). Born at Montmidy 5th Jan. 1697. Came to India in 1734. Was at Krishnapuram in 1740. Died at Pondicherry 24 July 1758. Aged 61.
- Vernet.**—(Antoine). Born at Sarlat 28th February 1726. Came to India in 1759, was in the mission for 20 years. Went back to France and was still alive in 1790.
- Vicary.**—(Hugue). Came to India 1725. Was in Pondicherry 1733. Died.....?
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BHARATA SHASTRAM-ARANYA PARVAM.

(Text of which translation, as given by Fr. Calmette,
appears in the History.)

అప్పుడు కలియుగాంత్యమున సంబళమనే గ్రామమున విష్ణుయా
సుడు బ్రాహ్మనుజన్మించి, ఒక మాటమాత్రములో సకల వేదశాస్త్ర
ములు నేర్చి, సర్వభవముడనించుకొని, అప్పుడెవరికి శఖ్యముగాని
విష్ణుయాసుడు, బ్రాహ్మనుగూడుకొని బ్రాహ్మణసమేతిముగా,
భూలోకమున సంచారముజేసి, అధర్మవృత్తిని నడిచే మేలియులను
సంహరించి, అప్పుడు సత్యధర్మము నిలిపి, అప్పుడు బ్రాహ్మనుడు
అశ్వమేధయాగ్యములు జేసెను. అప్పుడు ఆ విష్ణుయాసుడు భూమి
యంతయు బ్రాహ్మణులకు ధనముగానిచ్చి, యింతలో అతనికి
ముసలితనము సంభవించును. అందుచేత వనమునకుబోయి తపస్సు
జేయును. ఆ విష్ణుధర్మ నిర్ణయంజేసేప్రకారము, బ్రాహ్మణులు
సత్యధర్మ వర్ణ క్రమప్రకారము, బ్రాహ్మణ, చెత్రియ, వైశ్య,
శూద్ర జాతులు వారివారి మర్యాదల వర్తింపుచుండును. అప్పుడు
కొత్తయుగము ప్రవేశమగును. అప్పుడు ఆ రామప్రభువుచేత
సమస్తవనములు సకలదేశములు, పూజలుగలిగి, బ్రాహ్మణులు
పుంజ్యాస్తులై, యాగ్యక్రతువులు, తపస్సుజేసి, సత్యధర్మమున నడచి,
వేదశాస్త్రములు ప్రకాశించి, కాలవర్షాలు సంపూర్ణముగా కురిచి, సమస్త
ధనాదులు పంటలుబండ్లి, ఆవులు సంపూర్ణముగా పాలుపితికి (పిండి)
సకలదేశాలు సంభ్రమముగా సంతోషించును. ఇది కృతియుగ అది
వర్తమానము.

BHARATA SHASTRAM-ARANYA PARVAM.

(Telugu Text as now found in the printed Bharata Shastram.)

కలియుగమున విష్ణువు కల్కిరూపముచే ధర్మము

ప్రతిష్ఠించునని చెప్పట.

ఓ ధర్మతాజా! అంతట కలియుగాంతమందు, లోక ప్రసిద్ధమైన శంబళ మనెడి గ్రామముండును. ఆ శంబళ గ్రామమందు విష్ణు యశుడనెడి ఒక బ్రాహ్మణోత్తము డుండును. ఆ విష్ణుయశునకు విష్ణు దేవుడు, కల్కి రూపధారుడై పుట్టును. ఆ కల్కిపురుషుడు స్వరణమాత్రముచేతనే సకల వేదశాస్త్రములను గ్రహించును. సకల శస్త్రాస్త్ర విశేషములను పొంది ఆ కల్కిదేవుడు సార్వభౌముడగును. ఆ కల్కిదేవుడు, మహాతేజోవంతుడగును. ఆ కల్కిదేవుడు బ్రాహ్మణులను సహాయము జేసికొని సోయి, తన దివ్యశక్తివలన, భూమిని ఆక్రమించిన సకల మేచ్చులను చంపి, వైదిక ధర్మమును నిలుపును. అంతట కల్కిదేవుడు, అశ్వమేధ యజ్ఞము జేయును. ఆ అశ్వమేధ యజ్ఞమందు, సకల భూమిని బ్రాహ్మణులకు భాగించి యిచ్చును.

అట్లు కల్కిమూర్తి, మహా ధర్మకీర్తివంతుడై, ముసలితనమందు తపోవనమునకు వెళ్ళి తపస్సు జేయుచుండును. ఆ కల్కిమూర్తిచేత

ప్రతిష్ఠించబడిన ధర్మమువలన, బ్రాహ్మణాది వర్ణములన్నియు, మర్యాద పూర్వకముగా ప్రవర్తింపగలవు. అంతట కృతయుగము వచ్చును ఆ కృతయుగమందు సకల దేశములయందును, వుద్యానవనము లుండును. మనోహరములైన యజ్ఞశాలలును, వనములును దేవాలయములును గలిగియుండును. జనులకు మహాసౌఖ్యము గలిగియుండును. అనేక బ్రాహ్మణ సమూహములు, తపస్సుజేయుచు సంకులముగా నుందురు. యజ్ఞములను చేయుటకు ద్రవ్య సంభారములు విశేషముగా గలిగియుండును. సర్వదా వైర్ల విశేషముగా ఫలించును. ఈ ప్రకారము సకల దేశములును, ప్రకాశింపుచుండును. ఆ మాకాలములయందు, తగిన వర్షములు కురియుచుండును.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF ABOVE.

O, Dharmaraja! At the close of Kaliyuga there will be a village renowned throughout the world by the name of Sembala. In that village there will be a Brahmin of rare excellence bearing the name of Vishnuyesudu. The God Vishnu will be born to Vishnuyesudu under the incarnation of *Kalki*, who will learn all Vedas and Sastras by mere *శ్రవణ* (remembrance). He becomes an Emperor of the whole Earth (*Sarvabhouma*) and an adept in the arts of archery and swordsmanship. He becomes resplendent. With the aid of Brahmins this valiant *Kalki* will invade the Country, kill the Mlechas and establish Vedic Dharma. Afterwards he performs a horse-sacrifice (*Aswamedhayagam*). On the occasion of that ceremony he parcels out the land and distributes it among Brahmins.

After this *Kalki*, having earned the name of a just ruler, will betake himself to a desert, where he will spend his days in making penance. The (Vedic) Dharma, established by this *Kalki*, will bring back the Brahmins and other (three) castes to the regular observance of their caste regulations. During *Krithayuga*, there will be in all countries, pleasure-gardens, beautiful places of sacrifice and temples of worship. Then all people will enjoy great prosperity and contentment. Numbers of Brahmins will seek peace in penitential deeds. There will be no lack of money and other requirements to perform sacrifices. The fields will yield great crops. The rain will fall in copious showers in due seasons. Thus will all countries beam with happiness.

SANSKRIT VERSION.

कल्की विष्णुयशा नाम द्विजः कालप्रचोदितः ।

उत्पत्स्यते महावीर्यो महाबुद्धिपराक्रमः ॥

Kalkee Vishnuyasā nāma dwijah kālprachōditah
Utpatsyate mahāvīryō mahābuddhi parākramah

सम्भूतः शंबलग्रामे ब्राह्मणावसथे शुभे ।

महात्मा वृत्तसम्पन्नः प्रजानां हितकृन्तुषु ॥

Sambhūtah Sambalagrāmè brāhmanāvasathè subhè
Mahātma vrittasampannah prajānām hitakrinnripa

मनसा तस्य सर्वाणि वाहनान्यायुधानि च ।

उपस्थास्यन्ति योधाश्च शस्त्राणि कवचानि च ॥

Mānasā tasya sarvāni vāhanānyāyudhāni cha
Upasthāsyanti yōdhāscha Sastrāni Kavachāni cha

स धर्मविजयी राजा चक्रवर्ती भविष्यति ।

स चेमं संकुलं लोकं प्रसादमुपनेष्यति ॥

Sa dharmavijayee rājā chakravartee bhavishyati
Sa chēmam sankulam lokam prasādamupanêshyati

उत्थितो ब्राह्मणो दीप्तः क्षयान्तकृदुदारधीः ।

संक्षेपको हि सर्वस्य युगस्य परिवर्तकः ॥

Utthitō brāhmanō dīptah kshayāntakridudārādhih
Sangkshèpakō hi sarvasya yugasya parivartakah

स सर्वत्र गतान् क्षुद्रान् ब्राह्मणैः परिवारितः ।

उत्सादयिष्यति तदा सर्वम्लेच्छगणान् द्विजः ॥

Sa sarvatra gatan kshudrān brāhmanaih parivāritah
Utsādayiṣhyati tadā sarvamleccaganān dwijah.

TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE.

Then, in due time, Kalki will arise in the form of a Brahmin, bearing the name of Vishnuyasā. He will be a mighty warrior, strong in wisdom and prowess. His birthplace will be the village of Sambhala, in a hamlet of holy Brahmins. He will be high-souled, virtuous and beneficent. At his command there will spring up arms and chariots, weapons and armour, and hosts of fighting men. Conquering all by his justice, he will be lord over all, and bring order out of the confusion. This noble Brahmin will put a stop to the world's decay and start the Yuga afresh. Attended by large numbers of Brahmins, he will annihilate the barbarian hordes.

APPENDIX.

TAMIL VERSION.

To still further show how this passage in the *Aranya Parvam* has been altered and obscured in different parts of Southern India, it was intended to give the Tamil version as well, but it seems to have been mutilated beyond recognition.

Taking Father Calmette's contention as an accepted fact, we may not improbably ascribe its disappearance from the Tamil version to the fact that the Indian "litterati" have obliterated this passage with a view to remove so obvious and clear a proof of the truth of Christ's messsge. St. Thomas, no doubt, must have appealed to this prophecy in corroboration of the Gospel he came to announce in the Tamil country. It would be interesting to know how the passage stands in the numerous and various languages of middle and upper India.



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